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£60,000 APPEAL TO RESCUE MEMORIALS

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This hatchment belonging to Mr Henry Gerard is just one of 16 that are housed in St Leonard's Church in Deal. The Friends of St Leonard's Church want to raise £60,000 to restore the unique collection.

■ BY NICK AMES

AN APPEAL has been launched to save a collection of valuable memorials to some of the most famous seafaring families in England.

A total of £60,000 is required to restore the collection of heraldic devices known as hatchments, housed in St Leonard's Church, Deal.

They feature the coats of arms and motifs of noble families and would have been carried in front of a funeral procession. They came into use in the 17th century and replaced the practice of bearing the shield, helmet and other armour of a knight when he was buried.

"They show how important Deal was when it was a major naval port and form a unique collection," said Steve Goodsell, who is helping to organise the fund-raising drive.

Deal has 16 hatchments dating from between 1673 and 1865. The collection is extremely important as in many churches they have just disappeared as their importance was not recognised.

The designs kept in the church in Upper Deal have many connections with the sea. One is even of the family of Sir Francis Samuel Drake, who became a Vice Admiral but is also related to explorer and Spanish Armada hero Sir Francis Drake.

Two brothers who also became Admirals, Sir Edward Harvey and Sir John Harvey, are also represented. Others represent clergy and business people with the skull and crossbones a frequent device shown.

The Friends of St Leonard's Church intend to promote awareness of the relics by working with local groups, societies and schools.

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BEST SHOW YET: Visitors and exhibitors enjoyed a busy day at the Travel and Leisure Show

Travel show just the ticket for a place in the sun

■ BY NICK AMES

MORE than 4,000 visitors flocked to KOS Media's third Travel and Leisure Show at the Dover Cruise Terminal on Sunday to see the best tourism opportunities in the county.

Exhibitors enjoyed a brisk trade especially the cruise lines, with Fred.Olsen still taking bookings after the show had officially closed.

All of the major cruise lines were represented, and there was also a large representation from ferry operators, and tourist attractions in France.

Attractions

Kent International Airport staff were also inundated with enquiries about flights from Manston.

The best of Kent's attractions also saw large groups of interested visitors to their stands. Many reported running out of brochures early in the afternoon.

Coach companies also reported doing good business and the presentation theatre was busy all day, holding presentations on a wide range of topics, from local attractions to the Galapagos Islands.

This year there were also repre-

sentatives from inbound group tour operators visiting the show.

Exhibitors said they were pleased at the way their presentations were responded to and agreed it was important to highlight the variety and standard of tourism opportunities in the county.

David Foley, chief executive of Dover District Chamber of Commerce, said: "This was a splendid event which put a much-needed focus on Dover and the surrounding district, and really showed what the area has to offer."

"The show has been extremely welcomed by the east Kent business community and was well attended and worthwhile for all concerned."

"With tourism now responsible for around eight per cent of the national economy we need to ensure we attract as many people to Kent."

"Events such as this are an excellent way of outlining the virtues of the county and showing what we have to offer."

Angela Flynn, regional sales manager for the South of England for Fred.Olsen Cruise Lines, said "This was the best show yet, and we were delighted to see so many loyal Fred.Olsen customers, and we welcomed many new ones too."

At the show there were more than 30 prizes to be won which were drawn at the end, including a two-week cruise with Fred.Olsen.

Two issued fines for their drunken antics

TWO fixed-penalty notices have been issued after offences committed in Deal.

Police in Ethelbert Road intervened with a 32-year-old Deal man who was drunk, shouting and swearing in the street.

He was arrested for being drunk and disorderly in a public place and issued with a £80 fixed penalty notice before being released.

Police were also called to investigate an incident where car wing mirrors were smashed off several cars in Wellington Road, Deal.

Officers arrested a 19-year-old man from Deal for criminal damage. He was also detained and issued with a £80 fixed penalty notice.

Tourist information centre set for summer

THE tourist information centre in Sandwich reopens for the summer holiday season tomorrow (Thursday).

Visitors can use it to make bookings for both the ferries and National Express coach journeys.

Postcards, other souvenirs and guides to local attractions are also on sale in the building along with Ordnance Survey maps covering the whole of east Kent.

The centre is open from Monday to Saturday between the hours of 10 and 4pm until Sunday, October 31.

It is also open from noon to 3pm on Sundays during the Sandwich Festival and other notable local events.

Collection point for your spent batteries

HOUSEHOLDERS who want to avoid throwing old batteries out with the rubbish are being encouraged to use a newly-introduced free collection point at Deal Library in Broad Street.

It is now an offence to put them in normal refuse collections and should no longer be dumped in landfill sites where their toxic metals are considered a serious threat to the environment.

As well as at the town library, old spent batteries can be left at the household waste centre in Southwall Road, Deal.

Batteries contain metals which can be reused. There are well-established methods for the recycling of most batteries containing lead, nickel-cadmium, nickel hydride and mercury. For some, such as newer nickel-hydride and lithium systems, recycling is still in the early stages.

Ferry operator backs GB sailors

SKANDIA Team GBR, Britain's most successful sailing team ever, are to travel to race fixtures with SeaFrance through Dover via a three-year sponsorship deal with the ferry operator.

Top sailors and windsurfers such as Beijing medallist Bryony Shaw, plus support staff will be crossing with SeaFrance to venues in Spain, France, Holland, Germany and eastern Europe where Olympic hopefuls will be battling it out in a number of competitions including the Sailing World Cup Series.

The series consists of seven regattas across the year, ending in Weymouth this August.

SeaFrance managing director,



ON BOARD: Skandia Team GBR have secured a three-year sponsorship deal with SeaFrance

Robin Wilkins, said: "We are delighted to be working with such a gifted and successful team of sailors

and our hopes are high for their chances in the future.

"We're all looking forward to welcoming the sailing squad onboard and following their progress this year."

Olympic team manager Stephen Park said: "The partnership with SeaFrance is going to be hugely beneficial to Skandia Team GBR."

"It will make the trip from Dover to Calais for our European events even easier for the sailors, support staff and all the equipment that goes hand in hand with Olympic Classes sailing."

"It's an exciting time for British sailing and we look forward to working closely with SeaFrance in the coming years."

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Sports world mourns loss of legend Harry

Broadcasting pioneer and voice of boxing dies at 84

■ BY TOM BETTS

THE world of sport has paid tribute to commentator Harry Carpenter following his death.

Boxer Barry McGuigan has led the tributes to the BBC broadcaster who died in hospital describing the legendary boxing commentator as a "one-off".

The 84-year-old was born in south London but later lived in Sandwich. With one of sport's most instantly recognisable voices, he worked at the BBC for almost 50 years before retiring in 1994. While he worked on a variety of sports throughout his career, it was in boxing where he became synonymous.

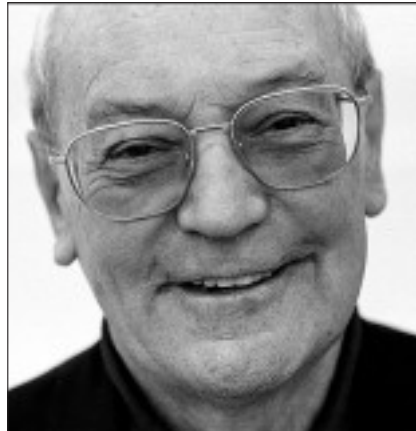
Relationship

Carpenter was an integral part of many boxers' careers and McGuigan, who lives near Faversham, was one of a host of big names to remember him fondly this week.

"Harry was an amazing one-off individual, one we'll never see again," he told the BBC.

"He had a tremendous relationship with the fighters, a real respect and old-fashioned honour. It was really unique and that's why it was such a sad day."

After serving in the RAF as a morse code operator during World War Two, Carpenter's career as a journalist began in 1946. Although



LESS WAS MORE: Harry Carpenter's commentary style endeared him to the nation during 50 years with the BBC

he later contributed to several national newspapers, it was his work with the BBC, where he joined in 1949, for which he will be chiefly remembered.

Carpenter covered some of the biggest sporting events of the last century, including the epic 'Rumble in the Jungle' clash between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in Kinshasa, Zaire.

His likeable character and deep love for the sport helped him build a friendship with many of the sport's biggest names outside the ring, most famously including Frank Bruno.

The pair formed a double act in later years, with Bruno's catchphrase "know what I mean Harry" coming out of their verbal sparring.

In later years Carpenter was a recognisable figure in Sandwich and could often be found playing golf at nearby Royal St George's, where he was an honorary member.

His friend and fellow broadcaster Peter Allis wrote: "Harry Carpenter liked a glass of champagne at 11 in the morning – just to loosen the voice, as he used to put it.

"And when he was entertaining at home in Sandwich, Kent, he was the most wonderful host. His son, you see, was in the wine trade and lived in Cognac, France.

"So Harry knew where all the good stuff was stored and was never slow to offer it.

"I met Harry Carpenter when he took over anchoring the BBC's golf coverage back in the early Sixties.

"He was, quite simply, one of the nicest, most professional men you could ever imagine. His death aged 84 at the weekend robs us of one of the icons in the world of television presenting – and means I have lost a very dear friend.

"In spite of his diminutive stature – fully 5ft 5in – and his unlikely South London nasal twang, Harry Carpenter was one of the best loved of all the BBC sports presenters."



FUN-RUNNER: MP Gwyn Prosser took part in the Comic Relief run at Fowlmead Country Park

MP is all miles after Comic Relief effort

MP Gwyn Prosser, kept up his 100 per cent record of taking part in every Comic Relief Fun Run when he joined over 400 other runners at the Fowlmead Country Park.

The Dover and Deal member has taken part in every one of the runs organised in the park or along the "Westminster Mile" – a route popular with MPs raising cash for charity.

Officially opening the Fun Run Day, Mr Prosser praised what he described as "our wonderful Fowlmead Country Park".

"Comic Relief is one of the biggest fund-raising events in the country and fun runs like ours in Fowlmead make an important contribution to the campaign and are being repeated in cities, towns and villages in every part of the UK," he said.

"But the most important of all those events is undoubtedly our very own Fowlmead Fun Run here in Deal and it's great to welcome such a massive crowd of runners and supporters"

"Running the One Mile Challenge is great fun – these events make us more active, raise funds for Comic Relief and most importantly, change the lives of people living in the poorest countries of the world and of vulnerable people here in Britain"

Town gets its new academy

A NEW academy for Dover has been announced by the Government after its funding was approved by Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Education.

Dover Christ Church Academy, as it will be called, will replace Archer's Court Maths and Computing College and is scheduled to open in September.

It will initially be based in the school's current building before moving to new premises in 2013.

The co-educational academy will provide for up to 950 students aged 11-18, as well as for about 40 pupils with profound, severe and complex special needs in a specialist unit.

The academy's specialisms will be mathematics, computing and music.

Dover MP Gwyn Prosser said: "Labour's new academies are proving very popular with parents and pupils because they allow schools to make a fresh start, they attract lots of extra funding and they benefit from pulling in support and expertise from collaborating schools and sponsors.

"There's massive investment coming into education in my constituency – in addition to the conversion of Archer's Court into an academy, the Government is also helping the creation of two further new Academies – one on the Castle Community School site in Deal and another on the Duke of York's Military school site in Dover."



'Vital rail evidence kept from watchdog'

CAMPAIGNERS for improved train services and the inclusion of Deal in the high-speed service to London have condemned what they consider to be the limited information provided by Southeastern Trains to a Dover Council watchdog committee.

Members of the Trains4Deal group say they are shocked that the train company representative only provided statistics for Deal and failed to cover Walmer Station or offer comparative numbers for Dover and the smaller communities at Sturry and Minster that do get fast-train stops.

Trains4Deal organisers are submitting a formal objection to the Office of Rail Regulation, suggesting there is sufficient potential demand to warrant two trains an hour

including an hourly high-speed service for much of the day.

At present rail services from Deal and Sandwich run once an hour up to London via Dover and Ashford.

The high-speed Javelin trains do not stop at either station, but they can be boarded at Dover where they run through Folkestone and from Ashford to St Pancras at their maximum speeds, giving a journey time of 37 minutes.

To get to Canterbury requires changing at Dover or catching a train to one of the Thanet stations and changing there.

Staff at Southeastern trains have promised to look into the calls from Deal residents for a better service for the area.



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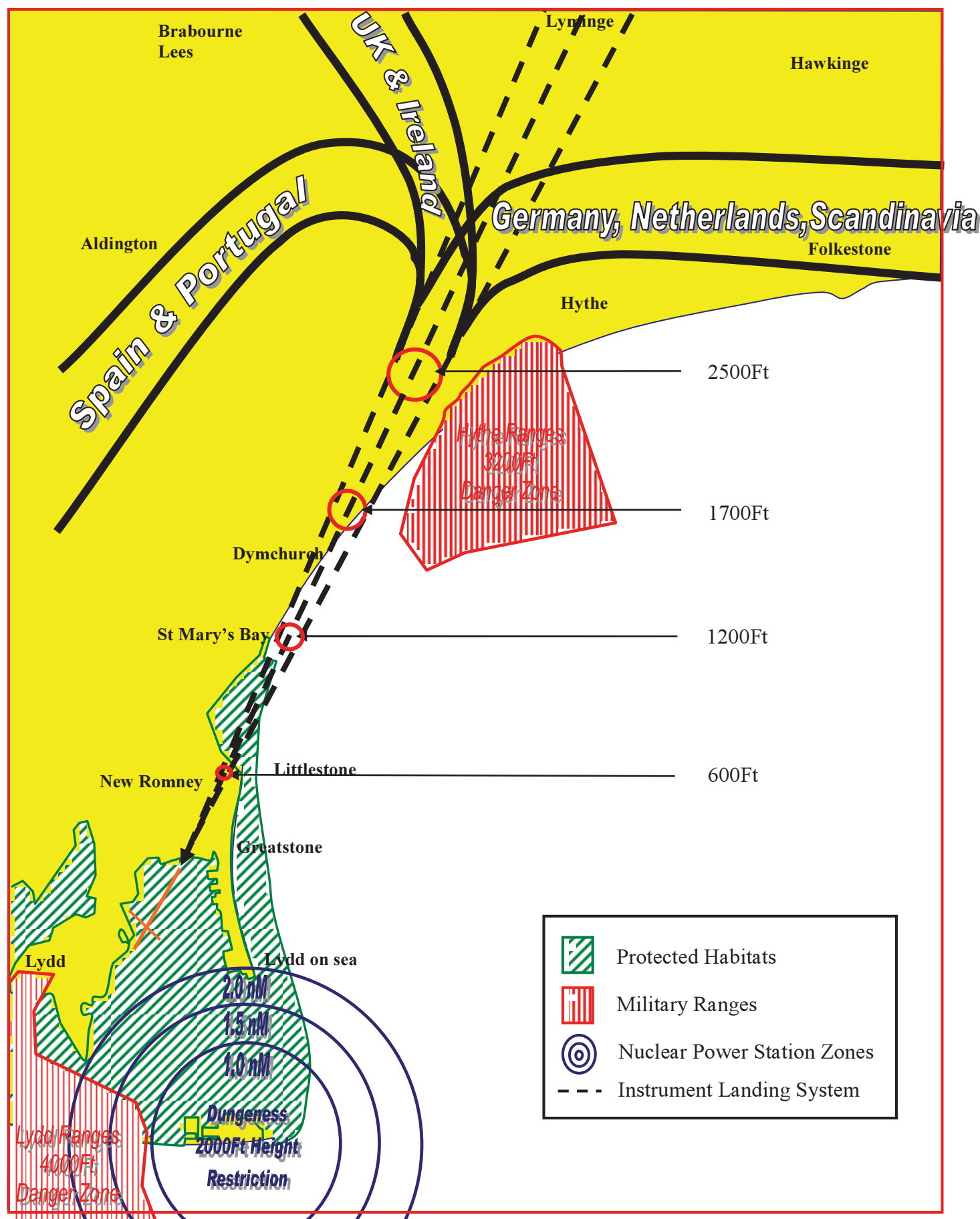
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Research into family tree unearths fate of Lancaster crewman from Sandwich

Heroes who never returned

■ BY NICK AMES

RESEARCH into a wartime family death has led to an amateur historian uncovering the fate of the crews of RAF wartime Lancaster bombers who took to the skies on October 14, 1944.

Marc Hall set out to find what happened to his grandfather's cousin, Sgt Richard Wolsey, who was one of seven crewmen who died when their aircraft was shot down a few miles north-west of the target German city of Duisberg.

But as his research widened into examining all the raids that particular night he also uncovered the fate of a local airman whose plane went down in a raid on the city of Brunswick.

Sgt George Boyd, of 61 Squadron, who lived in Sandwich, was wireless operator on the ill-fated aircraft.

"He was on board Lancaster ME595, which was hit by anti-aircraft fire on the bombing run and caught fire," said Mr Hall.



BOMBER COMMAND: The men who flew missions over Germany in Lancaster ME595 – Sgt George Boyd is front left

"All seven crew managed to bail out, but two of them were killed. One was Sgt George Boyd. He was injured in the aircraft by fragments of flak and was helped by another crewman. But Sgt Boyd's parachute got caught on something and unpacked in the aircraft.

"The chute could not be repacked and with the aircraft going down in flames, he had to just jump. Unfortunately, it didn't deploy properly and he was killed."

Another crewman also died that night.

"Flight engineer Sgt Cyril Webb survived the jump and was on the run for four days," said Mr Hall.

"But he was captured by the Nazis and murdered – he was shot after his capture.

"The British captured three suspects after the war and had them hanged in 1947 for war crimes.

"Sgt Webb and Sgt Boyd are buried side by side in the Hanover war cemetery, which is looked after by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission."

Mr Hall has managed to locate Sgt Boyd's brother, Paddy, who lives in Deal, and has told him the story.

He has also spoken to the pilot of the lost Lancaster, Norman Hoad, who retired from the RAF with the senior rank of Air Vice Marshal. Mr Hall has extended his research to all bombers lost on that particular raid.

He has been to crash sites in Germany, visited graves and spoken to relatives.

The RAF action that night was not wholly successful as cloud cover obscured much of the original target of Duisberg.

The city was one of the most heavily defended in Germany as it was a key port and industrial part of the Ruhr valley.

The targets were factories making war material, along with chemical and steel plants.

So a second sortie took place the same evening and 1,000 heavy bombers pounded the target, with more success as the weather had cleared.

Sgt Boyd's aircraft was part of a force of 230 bombers which attacked Brunswick on the same night, after having been held in reserve for the main raid. It was the only aircraft lost in that particular action.



SGT RICHARD WOLSEY



SGT GEORGE BOYD

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BY MARIJKE COX

FORMER mining villages left devastated by the closure of the pits 25 years ago are the focus of a new Government review aimed at reviving coalfield communities.

Their demise came in the late 1980s when then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher closed all the uneconomic coalmines, forcing thousands out of work and ending an industry.

In the last decade the Government has invested £1.5 billion nationwide in an attempt to transform these ruined areas, but housing minister John Healey says more needs to be done.

The national review comes after the Government was criticised by spending watchdog the Commons Public Accounts Committee for letting projects run over budget and behind schedule and also questioned the success of the schemes.

Villages surrounding Kent's three main former collieries – Betteshanger, Snowdown and Tilmanstone – are a particular focus.

Mr Healey said it was a huge task to revive them and the review was crucial to ensure that investment was working.

"The review I've announced is to check the investment we've put in and the schemes we've set up are doing everything they can for the people in Kent who were hit hardest by the pit closures," he said.

"The review will look at what schemes are working well, what needs to be improved and how we can get the best value for public money that Government invests."

Mr Healey said the review would look at how to get the best out of national coalfields programmes operating across the region.

In Betteshanger, a total of £18.8 million from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has been invested to create a sustainable, mixed-use development, including a nature reserve, a visitor centre and 3.5km cycle circuit registered for Olympic training.

Forgotten mining communities targeted in Government review



SEAMS LIKE YESTERDAY:

Mrs Thatcher's decision to close all uneconomic coalmines in the late 1980s sparked violent scenes at collieries such as Tilmanstone (far left) and saw thousands of men left unemployed

And in the past year, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, working with Dover District Council, has given grants totalling £64,300 to a variety of projects in former mining communities as part of its Bridging The Gap programme.

Initiatives

Mr Healey said: "The collapse of the coal industry saw a quarter of men across coalfield areas lose their jobs and nearly half of all ex-miners suffered long-term illness and injury.

"That's why we won't give up on these communities and continue to make sure our investment brings new jobs and hope where it's needed."

But Gary Cox, chairman of the Move The Miner campaign and the Kent Miners Festival, said that promoting heritage should be at the forefront.

"We need to start generating enthusiasm about mining history," he said.

"It's not just about spending money on developments, but educating people about the generations before them and the work they did in the mines.

"If you drive a car into Wales you know when you're going through mining communities, but there's nothing here. Some people don't even know there were mines in Kent. Heritage is extremely important and there should be more focus on that."

But Mr Healey stressed that it took time to deliver big changes and vowed not to give up.

"Over the last decade we've invested £1.5 billion to help almost 150,000 people across the country into jobs and training and brought land the size of 4,500 football pitches

back into use," he said. "But there's more to be done and we will stand by the former coalfield areas."

Ex-miner and retiring Barnsley MP Michael Clapham will chair the review, along with senior members from the Industrial Communities Alliance, HCA, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Coalfields Enterprise Fund and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

He said: "This review confirms the Government's commitment to the economic and social regeneration of former coalfield communities. Funding over the last decade has had a major impact. We will now consider the delivery of the initiatives, in particular how the agencies could work better together in the context of wider regeneration to maximise the benefit of funding in coalfield communities."

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Lifeboat called out to German vessel

THE volunteers of the Dover lifeboat were called out to go to the aid of an injured crew-member aboard a container ship.

After going alongside the 139-metre, 8,000-tonne, German-registered vessel, two lifeboat crew-members went aboard to assess the casualty's injuries.

He described to them how he had fallen and his leg had got trapped between two hatch covers. This had caused some injuries and resulted in the ship's captain contacting Dover Coastguard for advice.

The first-aid-trained lifeboat crew dressed the wound and prepared the man for the transfer to the lifeboat.

Injuries

Once they were ready, Coxswain Stuart Richardson took the rescue vessel City of London II alongside the ship once more and the casualty was able to carefully step aboard.

Once aboard, he was made comfortable in the lifeboat's wheelhouse for the short trip into harbour.

Mr Richardson said: "Fortunately the weather and sea conditions were good and this made the transfer of personnel between the two vessels much easier and safer. The casualty's injuries did not appear life-threatening and he was able to walk from the lifeboat to the ambulance."

The man was taken by ambulance to the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford, where he received treatment and was discharged to make his way to Dublin to rejoin the ship at its next port of call.

• The volunteer Dover Lifeboat Fund-raisers will open their shop over all four days of the Easter holiday weekend. The shop will also be open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from the beginning of May.

Young acts are proof town has bags of talent

BY NICK AMES

THE Dover's Got Young Talent show on Saturday was a complete sell-out, with the audience witnessing some of the most talented acts in the area in a variety show that lasted three hours.

Although the money raised has still to be confirmed, it is expected to top £3,000 for Help For Heroes.

Organiser John Goodwin said: "It was a superb show with singing, dancing, acting and music.

"Groups taking part were Dods the Next Generation, Dover Youth Theatre, CJ's Dance and Fitness Centre and students from St Edmunds School, along with Emily Wheeler, a 12-year-old violinist; Keiran Gaffney, a 13-year-old drummer; 17-year-old Louise Orfila; and Ebony Johnson.

"The show finished with a tribute to the servicemen and women when a bugler played the Last Post and Reveille and a serving soldier read out a heart-rending story before a collection was taken at the door."

The show was staged by a group of 30 volunteers and had Steve Ladner from Radio Kent with Terry Nunn as compères.

Also there were Dover and Deal MP Gwyn Prosser and the mayors of Dover, Deal and Folkestone, along with Michael Hogben, from the Real Deal TV programme, who introduced the acts.

A Help For Heroes desk manned by Rob Pooley, the county coordinator, did a brisk trade all evening, while the raffle was also a success, with the ticket-sellers from the Dover Carnival Association.

The show was sponsored by Dover Town Council and the acts and programme were sponsored separately so that every penny raised on the night went to Help For Heroes.

Mr Goodwin said: "It was without doubt one of the biggest shows of its type held in the town hall and everyone agreed Dover has got some real young talent.

"It was impossible to pick out one act as a highlight because the young people worked so



ON SONG: Louise Orfila, just one of the gifted performers at Saturday's wonderful showcase for the town's musical talent

hard to produce such an evening of sheer entertainment. They worked their socks off and the audience knew it and shouted, cheered and clapped each act – they were a credit to the town and deserved the praise that they received."

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QUESTION & ANSWER

JOE PASQUALE



Q You're somewhat of a panto pro – how long have you been involved in pantomime?

A I've done 28 years of panto, so I've done quite a lot of this type of work. I've never done this show, but I've done musicals and plays – I did Mel Brooks's The Producers the year before last, so I've done a fair few bits and pieces.

Q How many times have you performed at Chatham's Central Theatre?

A Loads of times, because I live here. I live in Rochester, so I know the area well. It's one of the reasons for doing this for me. I can get home every night. Normally at this time of the year we're out on the road. This year, for a month, I can get home every night, which makes a change for me.

Q What are you looking forward to in this role?

A Everyone knows the story of The Wizard Of Oz and the kids know the characters. You haven't got to build the character up. When the producer asked me to do it, he said you could do whatever you want. I thought I'd do the scarecrow as I could wear my own clothes.

Q How does being live on stage compare with TV work?

A When you're doing live stuff, you've got the experience of the live audience to react to

you straight away. You know what their feedback is straight away. What you see is what you get [on stage] – you can't go back and say 'Oh sorry, can we do that again, I mucked it up.'

Q How significant was I'm A Celebrity...?

A It was three weeks of my life that I really enjoyed, but everyone asks if it was life-changing. No, it was like going on a rubbish holiday with 15 people you'll never want to see again, then coming back like Elvis for three weeks. I'm not knocking it – if they asked me to do it again, I'd do it at the drop of a hat. I loved it. You came back a stone and a half lighter and constipated.

Q What are you looking forward to in the live show? What are you expecting from the audience?

A All these types of shows you can rehearse for weeks on end, but there is always something missing – the audience. That's why our rehearsal schedule is quite tight.

We only have about eight days of rehearsals. If you go over and over it, you're not sure if it is funny any more.

Once the audience get in front of you, they're the ones who tell you if it is any good. Especially the kids – they are brutally honest. Adults will sit through two-and-a-half hours of cack, but kids, if they are bored, will get up, go to the toilet, text their mates or whatever. It's a different type of show working for kids.

Q Is it important to introduce them to the theatre?

A Yes. At the moment, all the kids know is what is behind a video screen. What's on the Playstation or X-box, what's on the computer or email, or on the telly with 300 channels. So when they get into a theatre, they're like 'I didn't know it was like this'. I think it is important kids are introduced to live theatre.

Q What type of shows do you like to watch?

A Over the past couple of years with my son, who's 21 and an actor, we've said we have to see all these shows that have been running for 22-23 years. They've been running because they have something special about the show. So we've been to see Les Mis, The Phantom Of The Opera and others.

Q What is the best show you've been to see?

A The best one we've seen is The Woman In Black. It's been running for 24 years now. It's a horror story and a ghost story. There are two people and they play about 12 characters each and it blew me away.

There's no set and it's all done with lighting and a bit of net curtain. It's the experience of live theatre and of two people holding an audience for two-and-a-half hours. That is what live theatre is all about – experiencing something, not just watching it on a dead screen.

Q & A

The comedian talks to **Mathew Beech** at the launch of the Central Theatre's Easter pantomime, The Wizard Of Oz, about his love of live theatre, why he loves working in Kent and winning I'm a Celebrity...

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National award for offenders project

PIONEERING work with offenders and their families in Dover to reduce re-offending and prevent their children becoming offenders has been recognised with a national award.

The Children and Families Enterprise Project is among only 11 recipients of the Annual Butler Trust Award, which recognises achievements in the field of criminal-justice work across the United Kingdom.

Evan Jones, head of community services at St Giles Trust; Michelle Gill, senior support worker at the Children and Families Enterprise Project; and Howard Cohn, commissioning-services manager at Kent Probation, have jointly been honoured for their endeavours.

Kent's Children and Families Enterprise project works with offenders to give practical support and strengthen and support the family as a whole.

The project, run by St Giles Trust, receives referrals for offenders supervised by Kent Probation who can benefit from their services.

Health chief moves

ANN Sutton, chief executive of NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent, has announced her temporary move to lead health services in Surrey.

While she is away, David Meikle, currently deputy chief executive at NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent, will become acting chief executive.

Ms Sutton has been asked to take up the role of interim chief executive at NHS Surrey while a permanent appointment is made to the recently-vacated chief-executive post there.

MP responds to lobbying claims in newspaper

■ BY JAMES ALEXANDRE

MICHAEL Howard has admitted that he was approached by the fake lobbyists who exposed three ex-Cabinet ministers but says he did not follow up their interest.

The Shepway MP and other Tories stayed away after being warned of a possible sting, according to The Guardian newspaper.

The former Home Secretary and ex-Tory leader, who is standing down at the next election, already has a string of paid directorships declared in the Register of Members' Interests.

Mr Howard told Yourshepway: "It is true that I was approached by someone purporting to represent a firm called Anderson Perry Associates. I did not pursue their approach and I did not attend any meeting with them."

Labour MPs Stephen Byers, Geoff Hoon and Patricia Hewitt – all former members of the Cabinet – have been suspended by the Parliamentary Labour Party after the Dispatches programme was broadcast on Channel 4.

It implicated them in the process of asking for money in exchange for influencing Government

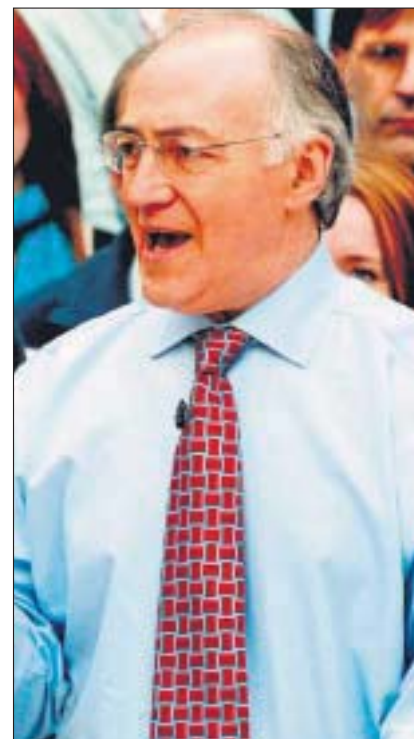
policy and an internal party investigation is under way. Mr Byers has also referred himself to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

The national newspaper said that two days after being contacted by the would-be lobbyists, Howard emailed back, suggesting "perhaps it would be a good idea for us to meet for breakfast" and said "I should perhaps mention that I have also been approached by another company in your field, but have not so far signed up to anyone".

Expenses

The Folkestone and Hythe representative, who has been in office for 27 years, is currently on the board of four companies and has been paid more than £36,000 in his role as non-executive chairman of Northern Racing since August last year.

His other roles include being deputy chairman at Canadian mining company Entrée Gold, which last year found valuable reserves of gold and copper potentially worth billions



TARGET: Folkestone and Hythe MP Michael Howard says he did not pursue the approach by the would-be lobbyists

of pounds in Mongolia. Mr Howard also holds directorships with accident-management company Hephire Group and mobile-payment firm Luup.

It was revealed in February that he was forced to pay back more than £7,000 in expenses payments after an investigation by retired civil-servant Sir Thomas Legg into MPs' claims.

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Carol Ridler Hand Crafted Wood is a totally rural enterprise producing wooden pieces for decoration inspired by English country life. The company was founded in 2006 by Carol who lives and works in an old farming village overlooking the Vale of Belvoir accompanied by her faithful chocolate labrador 'Dougal'.

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7. LUCY TOM DOORSTOPS

Lucy Tom based in Cirencester Wiltshire, started as a home curtain/blind making business, but with so many offcuts this dynamic entrepreneur has created a new doorstep business. Using quirky and original designs, now famous for their chickens and scotty dogs. Come and have a look at these to inspire your whole new approach to keeping your door ajar!

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With over 25 puppet designs to collect, these beautifully simple original puppet and craft kits contain everything you need to make the project inside. Each kit comprises custom made recycled cardboard and wooden parts, and present the perfect gift and entertainment for rainy days, at home or on holiday!

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Again from Fallen Fruits, from their Classic Cast Iron Collection, quirky fun and highly collectable!

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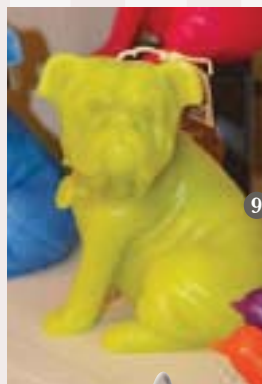
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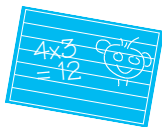
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17



AT THE SALUTATION



Pupils warned over effects of cyber-bullying

SANDGATE primary school pupils have been getting the lowdown on cyber-bullying from their neighbourhood community support officer.

PCSO Mark Wilson (right) and Ian Norman from Pent Valley Technology College spoke to year 6 students and showed them a film about internet safety.



Cyber-bullying can occur in chat rooms, through instant messaging and also as mobile-phone text messages.

The children took part in a discussion about bullying, the effects of bullying on the victim and what they should do if they are bullied.

They also gave internet safety advice such as never giving out personal information to people they meet online and to beware of agreeing to meet people they have met on the internet without telling a parent or carer.

PCSO Mark Wilson said: "We had a good response from the children and a lively discussion, which shows they thought about what was being said and are now better informed about staying safe on the internet and mobile phone."

There are websites offering advice about internet safety; these include www.thinkyouknow.co.uk and www.getsafeonline.org.

PCSO Mark Wilson is part of the Shepway East Neighbourhood Policing Team. You can phone him on 01303 289271.

All you need to know about ancient art of belly-dancing

■ BY JAMES ALEXANDRE

THE ORIGINS and history of belly-dancing will be explored in a series of public lectures being held at University College Folkestone.

Angela Wooi will talk about the world's oldest dance, from its ancient Middle Eastern origins to its contemporary fusion of other styles.

A professional Egyptian and Gothic belly-dancer, instructor and choreographer, Angela has also produced The Bride For Dracula, the world's first and only belly-dance version of Bram Stoker's classic novel Dracula.

She has performed nationally and internationally and studied with some of the greatest names in Middle Eastern dance.

Angela is one of the only instructors in Kent



UNIQUE: Gothic belly-dance instructor Angela Wooi

teaching Gothic-style belly-dance and runs two troupes – Anaconda, who use traditional and contemporary belly-dance, and The Brides, who dance as "blood-sucking vampires".

Her dances push the boundaries of the Middle Eastern art, mixing the traditional with the macabre, the kitsch with the comedy.

Angela's lecture will discuss the use of theatre, drama and narrative in dance and the emergence of Gothic and asks the question: what is to become of the world's oldest dance form?

The lectures have the broad theme of creativity and communication to reflect UCF's role in Folkestone's arts-based regeneration.

They began earlier this month with a talk by Professor Grenville Hancox, director of music at Canterbury Christ Church University.

This was followed by author and freelance journalist Jane Wenham-Jones, who spoke about the dos and don'ts and the highs and lows of seeing your work published.

Angela Wooi's From Pharaohs To Vampires – Exploring The World's Oldest Dance Form takes place on Tuesday, April 27. To book, phone 01303 760600 or go to www.ucf.ac.uk.

MP visits sports facilities funded by lottery grant

SHEPWAY MP Michael Howard joined pupils on a tour of Pent Valley's new £1.5 million lottery-funded sports and leisure facilities.

The Folkestone school's sports hall, dance hall and fitness suite were made possible thanks to a share of the Big Lottery Fund's New Opportunities for PE and Sport (NOPES) programme.

The school has since enjoyed plenty of success, winning the Fitness Industry Best Educational And Community Sports Facility award for 2009 and being named as a potential training centre for the 2012 Paralympics.

The school also regularly trains teachers and other professionals involved in providing PE for adults and children with disabilities.

The four-court sports hall, dance hall and fitness suite were funded by a grant of £1,574,419 from the NOPES programme.

The facilities allow students from Pent Valley Technology College and other nearby schools, as well as the public, to enjoy activities such as badminton, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, athletics and dance.

The centre also acts as a hub sports-centre for people with disabilities.



ON TOUR: MP Michael Howard with Pent Valley pupils

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your letters



LETTERS: Please send your letters to: The editor, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR

EMAIL: Email your letters to the editor, Dave Mairs: dave.mairs@kosmedia.co.uk

YOUR LETTERS

Casting aside right to vote for criminals

I have always gone out to vote whatever the weather or how well I felt.

Now, in spite of all the hype and all the MPs' wives and girlfriends encouraging me, this time I have decided against it.

I don't want to be accused of aiding and abetting criminals.

Pat Stewart
New Romney

Paper reminds us of time when law ruled

What an excellent publication this paper is – I always make a point of getting my free copy as it so informative.

Like last week's article on the little-known gravestone reminding all who pass by that a young girl was murdered and the killer hanged.

What a strong reminder of what the real world was like a few 100 years ago when the authorities practised 'common law' as a deterrent.

They were not afraid to carry the law of the land based on The Bible, which often states that we are to expect people imbued with evil to do evil things.

Nowadays evil does not exist, at least according to our learned psychiatrists – people are just deprived and need treatment.

I wonder what diagnoses they would come up with to explain Pol Pot of Cambodia, Stalin of Russia and Adolf Hitler carrying out mass murder. Probably that were bullied at school and needed to get their own back on society.

Perhaps one day society will get its own back on these idiots who release murderers to murder again.

John Atkins
Greatstone

Budget too taxing on our tourist industry

Kent cider-makers will lose out due to the 10 per cent increase in tax on the drink.

The Budget also confirms that a new tax blow for local tourism businesses will come into force on Monday, April 5.

People who own holiday lets will see the tax on their profits almost double and will no longer be able to claim investments in their businesses such as new furnishings and fittings against their tax bill.

This means local businesses that offer self-catering holiday accommodation could be particularly badly hit.

Damian Collins (Conservative)
Shepway Parliamentary hopeful

Let's celebrate young Asperger's sufferers

In celebration of World Autism Day (Friday, April 2), I wanted to draw

your blogger

This week's writer calls on the BBC to drop the sporty celebs and give straight to charity



EVER since David Walliams surprised everyone by swimming the English Channel for Sport Relief a few years ago the BBC has decided it has to get celebs to do similar challenges.

Mr Walliams's achievement was impressive. There was a real element of 'I could never do that' for most of us, but some of the more recent celebrity escapades have just been irritating rather than admirable.

The worst offender was the recent Christine Bleakley excursion to France on water-skis. We had to endure endless weeks of hyped speculation on the One Show about whether she would make it or not, but there was no chance she was ever going to fail.

There was no way the BBC would allow its top talent to come to harm, as was shown with the amount of support craft, fitness experts and water-sports advisers involved in the operation.

It took Ms Bleakley 100 minutes to cross the Channel, but you can see any old Tom, Dick and Harriet noisily water-skiing for hours on end off Herne Bay during the summer, much to locals' irritation.

I would have done it on one of those inflatable banana things you see towed around sunny holiday resorts.

I know it is all for a good cause, and I am sure Ms Bleakley's motivation for doing it was sincere, but I resent the BBC cashing in on it as an exercise in self-promotion.

If there is a story in your area you think we should be covering contact the editor, Dave Mairs, on 01303 817022 or email him on the details above. If you want to be the next blogger then all you have to do is submit an article to us (of around 550 words) and email it to the editor.

And don't forget, for all the latest news and video from your town log-on to www.kentnews.co.uk.

attention to the needs of a particular subgroup of autism, namely children with Asperger's Syndrome.

Children and young people with Asperger's usually have significant difficulties in socialising with others and making friends.

They also like to have routines, even if the routines do not appear to most people to be useful.

They can have very restricted interests and can have a difficulty with language development.

Their apparent 'oddness' can also lead to teasing, social isolation and possible mental-health problems.

Most professionals agree that early diagnosis offers the best outcome. The most appropriate treatment is a package of measures – depending on the needs of the child – which includes training in social skills, social-communication intervention and therapy to reduce the number of obsessive interests.

However, perhaps we should as a society, instead of labelling the difference, celebrate the diversity of human talents and ways of being.

In the world of maths, computing, engineering, cataloguing and science there is great value in a precise eye for details which many people with Asperger's have.

For parents of children with Asperger's, the choice of school is all-important. Many children with Asperger's are educated in mainstream schools.

A smaller number attend specialist schools. Whichever school is chosen by parents, it will need to celebrate diversity, to have an

inclusion policy that is genuine rather than illusory and which meets the child's special needs in a holistic and caring way.

I have written a free and simple fact-sheet on Asperger's which can be downloaded from the Appleford School website, www.appleford.wilts.sch.uk/, or you can write to Asperger's Simplified Factsheet, Appleford School, Shrewton, Wiltshire SP3 4HL.

Dr Peter Gardner
British Psychological Society

Share a cuppa and combat loneliness

We are writing to ask readers to support a campaign that helps to tackle the problems of isolation and loneliness among millions of pensioners in Britain.

The Bupa Care Homes 'Communi-tea Week' is a national initiative and supports older people in the UK who may be struggling on their own by providing a friendly face and reaching out to them over a cup of tea.

More than 3.7 million pensioners in Britain live alone and by 2033 the number of people aged 85 and above is projected to double from 1.6 million to 3.2 million.

So throughout the week from Monday, April 19, older people across the country are being invited to join in hundreds of tea-related events, from tea dances to afternoon tea parties, that are taking place in Bupa Care Homes.

There have been impressive achievements this year. Eddie Izzard's 43 marathon runs in 51 days showed genuine grit and determination, but then you hear about the Blue Peter presenter who has paddled down the Amazon.

It may be for charity, but it also seems suspiciously close to what a student might do in their gap year, except she was accompanied by a camera crew for a large part of the journey.

This is an ever-growing trend in charity: please sponsor me to ride round Europe on a motorbike for cancer, please sponsor me to walk up Mount Fuji for dogs for the deaf, or sponsor me to bungee-jump in New Zealand for those who suffer from the life-affecting disorder of vertigo. It's worthy, but it's also a very nice way to spend three weeks away.

And who pays for all this TV coverage? Is it the BBC or Sport Relief?

If it is the Beeb, why can't I just ask them to donate that element of my licence fee that pays for all the camera operators, sound engineers and video editors that have to cover these exploits directly to the charity?

Then I don't have to suffer TV schedules clogged up with it all and I can get on with watching more quality programming like Danny Dyer – I Believe In UFOs on BBC 3.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All blogs are supplied with full name and address of the authors. They do not reflect the view of the newspaper but are designed to give our readers the chance to air their views.

We are also encouraging communities to host their own tea parties and invite someone who lives alone, whether it is a neighbour or a friend.

We hope that as many people as possible will support Communi-tea Week by raising their mugs in support of this worthy cause.

For more information about your nearest event, or for more ideas about hosting your own, phone 0845 600 4622, or email communi-teaweek@bupa.com.

Siobhan Drane
Bupa

Meningitis linked to passive smoking

We welcome the recommendations in a report showing that children subjected to passive smoking are at an increased risk of bacterial meningitis.

The report for the Royal College of Physicians, undertaken by the UK Centre for Tobacco Control Studies at the University of Nottingham, calls for legislation to prohibit smoking in all vehicles and in entrances to public buildings, parks and outdoor play-areas frequented by children.

The report has been published before the Department of Health's July review of smoking legislation in England.

The report estimates that there are at least 200 cases of bacterial meningitis caused by passive smoking every year. The report also

calls for measures to encourage parents to stop smoking in front of their children at home.

The findings show that living in a household in which one or more people smoke more than doubles the risk of sudden infant death.

Children growing up with parents or siblings who smoke are also around 90 per cent more likely to become smokers themselves.

More than 9,500 children are admitted to hospital every year as a direct result of exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke.

In the absence of a vaccine to protect against all forms of meningitis, it is imperative that measures are taken to reduce the risk of contracting the disease, including avoiding smoking around babies and young children.

Passive smoking weakens the immune system in babies and toddlers, which puts them more at risk from infectious diseases including meningitis and septicaemia.

Parents who smoke increase the risk of their babies catching meningitis because cigarette smoke helps the bacteria adhere to the tissues lining the throat.

For more information about Meningitis UK, or to support the charity's Search 4 a Vaccine Campaign, phone 0117 373 7373 or visit www.meningitisUK.org.

Steve Dayman
Meningitis UK

Spare the axe that's over youth services

While Rosemary Watt-Wyness of the Prince's Trust is right to point out the vital importance of investing our young people, she fails to mention one of the main resources for them.

This being the youth workers and volunteers who day in and day out maintain the various youth centres across the country.

These people and centres, of which we are lucky enough to have three in Folkestone, are at the front line in providing support, information, advice and activities for youngsters.

They also regularly provide go-between and other services to the statutory services for those young people with problems and so help alleviate them.

Yet, due to the recession, as Ms Watt-Wyness mentions, we now hear of possible cuts to staff and services in this sector and indeed, as reported nationally, to courses for young people wanting to go into youth work to help their generation and future ones.

It would surely be short-sighted to cut these as, while most young people are generally well-behaved, to do so would very likely only result in costs being piled up in other sectors due to increases in antisocial behaviour and other knock-on effects.

Thus it is surely far better to maintain our youth services and not the 'yob' services for all our sakes.

Ray Duff
Folkestone

Social workers under pressure 'but managing'

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

SOCIAL workers are "just about coping" with the pressures of preventing a Baby P-type tragedy occurring in Kent.

That is the verdict of County Hall's chief executive Peter Gilroy, who has made 19 recommendations on how to improve children's social services after a 16-month review.

Among them is the need for regular updates from senior staff, easier computer programmes to cut red tape, and the introduction of new trainee and bursary schemes.

The review was commissioned by Kent County Council in December, 2008, in response to the Baby P scandal that resulted in social workers throughout the UK finding themselves under intense scrutiny.

Its publication comes just days after Rosalind Turner, the head of child protection services, issued a public apology when it emerged a social worker failed to act after being warned about a man who went on to kill his baby daughter.

Consequences

Christopher Sellman, 24, from Tunbridge Wells, was found guilty of the November, 2008, manslaughter of his 25-day-old daughter, Tiffany, when he appeared at Maidstone Crown Court earlier this month.

In the review, Mr Gilroy wrote: "As we know from recent events, even when a single human error is made it can have tragic consequences.

"It is at times like these we need to be most supportive, as well as publicly standing up to be held to account where systemic failure or professional incompetence or negligence are the causes. We – all of us – need to bear in mind that social workers are dealing with complex, dysfunctional and at times dangerous individuals and families. It is not a job for the faint-hearted."

Seventeen-month-old Baby P – who has since been named as Peter Connolly – died after receiving sustained abuse at the hands of his mother, her boyfriend and their lodger in Haringey, north London, in August, 2007.



VICTIM: Peter Connolly – Baby P – died in 2007

According to the NSPCC, an average of 67 children in England and Wales die at the hands of another person every year, with about 38,000 youngsters on child protection plans at any one time.

Mr Gilroy's review reports that the rate of violent child deaths in Kent between 1997 and 2009 is six per million of the population, compared with 17 per million nationally.

He wrote: "Complacency is the enemy of the maintenance of high practice standards.

"Constant vigilance and the pursuit of improvement are essential – reliance on good practice standards, policies and procedures can only give solid assurance if compliance with them is diligently monitored."

Key national reports on safeguarding vulnerable children have now been published by the Government, including its response to the Lord Laming inquiry and the first annual report to Parliament by the chief adviser on the safety of children, Sir Roger Singleton.

Mr Gilroy said these reports came too late for them to be referred to in his own review, and has therefore advised the main messages from them be analysed along with his recommendations for improvement.

He wrote: "I am pleased to commend my report and its recommendations to the county council for its consideration. It portrays a service that it just about coping with some difficult pressures, but with its morale intact.

"My recommendations about how arrangements might be improved, as befitting my professional background as a social worker, are offered as those offered by

Skilled volunteers are in short supply

PROFESSIONALS are being urged to help tackle the shortage of skilled volunteers.

New findings by the Kent Volunteers partnership reveal there is a desperate need for help from people working in the finance and accountancy, marketing and communications, and IT and technology industries.

Research also showed the voluntary sector is crying out for people skilled in sport, business administration and legal services.

To encourage those with specialist knowledge to sign up, a campaign has been launched by Kent County Council asking people to volunteer their skills and make a difference.

Carole Kincaid, county co-ordinator for Kent Volunteers, said it can often provide a way into future employment, as well as giving people the chance to try something new.

"It doesn't have to involve giving up a lot of time," she said. "Even small amounts can make such a difference. More importantly, it

can be a lot of fun and a way to be part of something different."

There have been concerns that shortages of volunteers could lead to cuts in services, which is why KCC believes it is important that skilled people get involved.

Peter Turner, a qualified accountant with more than 30 years' experience, has been an honorary treasurer for Voluntary Action Maidstone since 2007. He urged other professionals to try volunteering.

"I find it really satisfying to know I'm helping just by using my everyday skills," he said. "I hope other professionals will give it a try and discover what it can offer them."

Other skills areas being sought are creative, education and teaching, health and safety, and social and health care.

To find out how to start volunteering or for information on groups needing help, go to www.kent.gov.uk/volunteers.

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Rail summit hears of timetable concerns

COUNTY Hall's transport chief has admitted he is "concerned" about the effects of Southeastern's new timetable on commuters.

The train operator promised more choice and less overcrowding when it launched its new schedule in December, but passengers claim the changes have actually led to more delays, fewer London-bound services and busier carriages.

Now Kent County Council's cabinet member for transport, Cllr Nick Chard, has revealed he is monitoring what the firm does to alleviate the problems. The new timetable was one of the matters discussed at last Thursday's first rail summit, which brought together representatives from Southeastern, Network Rail and passenger groups.

Cllr Chard said: "We are concerned because

residents are concerned. That's one of the reasons we organised the summit, because it was an opportunity for rail users to have their say directly to Southeastern and for them to respond in a public forum.

"When the timetable was being revised we did make a point of supporting the retention of the Cannon Street service on the Maidstone line, but we will form a view on the overall picture once we have listened to what everyone has to say. This summit is about improving communication."

The new timetable was launched to coincide with the start of High Speed 1, which for an extra £8 per journey provides London commuters with quicker journey times.

But commuters say the 140mph trains are underused because they only reached the

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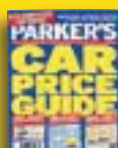
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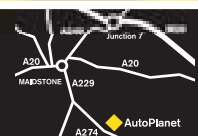
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The menu is changed monthly and March's offerings include the likes of avocado vinaigrette or garlic mushroom for starter, or salmon Provencale or a classic beef bourguignon for a main course.

Friday is reserved for the popular carvery, while the à la carte menu can still be enjoyed from Tuesday to Thursday and Saturday evenings, boasting chef Paul Martin's famous 'cooked-to-perfection' fillet steaks.

With its relaxed atmosphere, friendly service and classic country décor with an elegant twist, it's easy to see why the husband-and-wife team are still serving dinners after all this time.

The spring set-menu offer is available now, so book early to avoid disappointment.

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■ The Blue Pigeons

THE Blue Pigeons Inn is situated in the picturesque village of Worth, near Deal, Dover and Canterbury.

It is a village inn with letting rooms, a restaurant and a large family garden. Needless to say, it also has an attractive and well-stocked bar.

A widely-ranging menu includes dishes such as cream of mushroom and wild garlic soup or baked New Zealand mussels with tomato salsa as starters.

Popular main courses include pan-fried plaice fillet with romaine lettuce, roast pork and roast beef, along with vegetable terrine with pesto dressing.

Chocolate fondante, tarte au citron and poached pears in red wine and redcurrant are also a popular dessert choice.

The venue is in an idyllic hamlet yet is close to all amenities. The golf club at Royal St George's is just a few miles away, as is historic Sandwich.

blue pigeons

The inn itself is opposite the picturesque church of St Peter and St George and a patio view takes in all the rural surroundings.

A beautiful 'shabby chic' lounge bar is the perfect place for a drink, and the games bar is decorated in an 1850s Regency style.

With an acre of garden, weddings, Christenings and parties of every kind can be accommodated.

Two en-suite chalets and four themed guest rooms combine to make the old vicarage building very special indeed.

On the Easter weekend, April 4 sees a three-course à la carte menu and live entertainment. Call 01304 613 245 to book. A pub quiz will take place on April 8; information is available from the same number, while on April 17 there will be a murder-mystery night.

The Blue Pigeons Inn, The Street, Worth, Deal CT14 0DE.
Website: www.thebluepigeonsatworth.co.uk

CHEF RECOMMENDS

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Starter: Homemade minestrone soup with crusty bread and butter.
Main course: King prawns in garlic and herb butter with salad and brown bread.
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Telephone: 01227 709265

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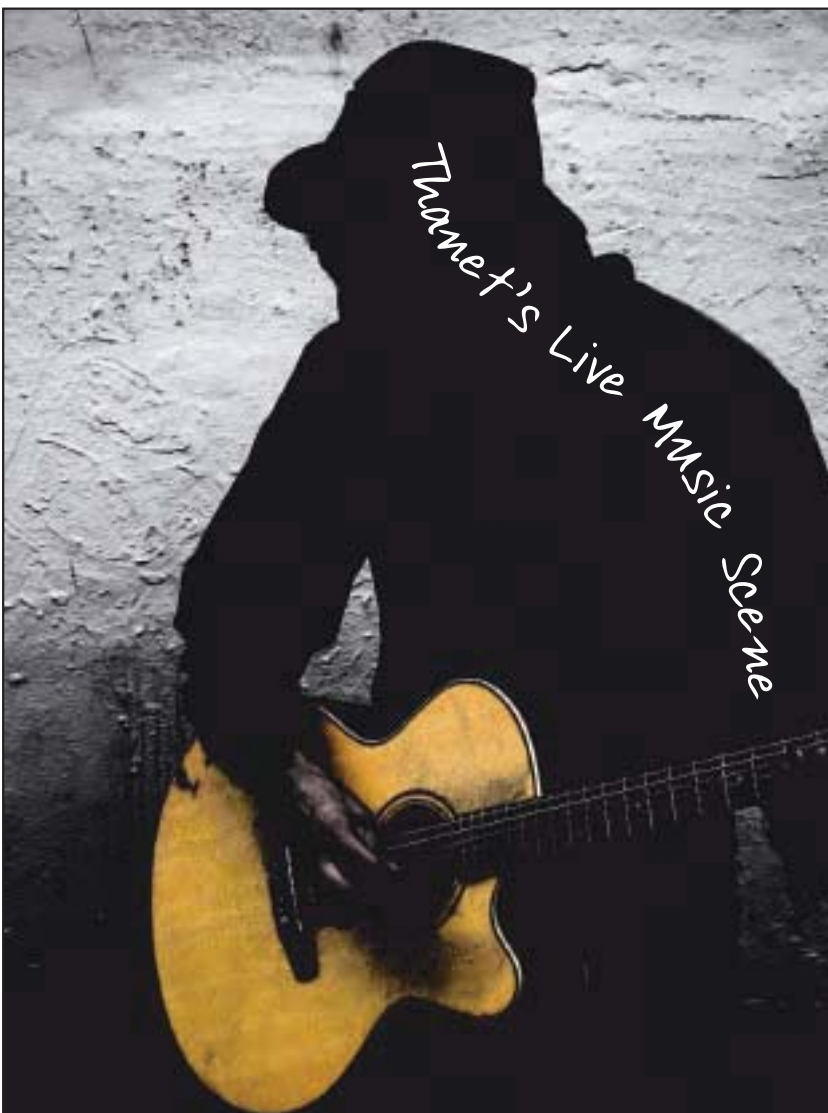
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Paintings go on show

A COLLECTION of paintings by Michael Hutchinson can be viewed at a gallery in Herne Bay this week.

Inside Out and Blue runs at the Bay Art Gallery in William Street until Easter Sunday and can be seen from 10am to 4pm daily. Admission is free.

To find out more call 01227 372266 or go online at www.bayartgallery.co.uk.

Enjoy jive at wine bar

ENJOY live music in a period setting as Deco 5 continues its spring programme of entertainment.

The Art Deco wine bar in Whitstable hosts a performance by The Violet Jive at 9pm on Saturday. Admission is free.

To find out more about upcoming events go online at www.deco5.co.uk or call 01227 770079.

Art makes impression

DISCOVER the Art of Lithography at the University of Kent's first exhibition at a new Canterbury campus gallery.

The School of Arts' Studio 3 Gallery in the Jarman Building hosts the exhibition until May 7 and admission is free. It is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Find out more online at www.kent.ac.uk.

Book for brewery tour

FROM tasty treats to tipples, enjoy an Easter Day with a difference at Shepherd Neame in Faversham.

The brewery is offering a morning tour on Sunday and a tutored tasting with their Master of Beers, followed by lunch.

Book at www.shepherdneame.co.uk, email tours@shepherdneame.co.uk or call 01795 542016.

Enjoy music of Crooner

RELAX in the company of Martin Croones this Easter Day.

Croones will be singing a selection of easy listening classics at the Kingsdown Park Holiday Park, near Deal, at 8pm on Sunday.

For more information call 01227 283445 or visit www.freewebs.com/the-crooner.

Chance to be Lion King

YOUNG people can take part in a theatre workshop inspired by The Lion King this Easter holiday.

Stage Door Theatre Company invites anyone aged from four to 21 to join in the workshop, which runs in Margate from Tuesday to next Friday at a cost of £65. Prior experience is not necessary. Email stagedoor_enquiries@hotmail.co.uk.

Theatre workshops

THEATRE workshops are being held at the Granville Theatre in Ramsgate.

Anyone aged from eight to 20 can learn about dance, choreography, drama, circus skills and much more at the workshops from Monday to Friday.

To find out more, call Trudi on 01843 855000 or email t.kingham1@btinternet.com.

Easter treats to keep kids busy

EASTER ACTIVITIES

Friday, April 2 to Monday, April 5
Various venues

ATTRACTIONS across East Kent are determined to give visitors a fantastic Easter this year.

People of all ages are sure to find something fun to do this weekend, with so many activities and seasonal treats on offer.

From the nostalgic appeal of days gone by to the wonderful baby animals that spring brings, great experiences can be enjoyed during this bright and optimistic time.

Take a trip back in time at Quex Park in Birchington as history comes to life in this attractive setting.

All the fun of the fair can be enjoyed at the traditional fairground, with lots of old-fashioned rides to delight visitors of any age. Muscles will be flexed in the strong man event and visitors can enjoy the transport of yesterday by taking a turn around the park with a carriage ride.

The interesting Victorian re-enactments give people a glimpse of what life would have been like at Quex more than 100 years ago. No Easter celebration would be complete without an egg hunt, so the traditional trail will be set up with chocolate treats on offer for those who successfully track down the treasure.

Visitors even have the chance to create their own period headgear at the bonnets and boaters family workshop.

Daily prizes will be up for grabs so everyone should get creative and see if they can make the most impressive hat.

After all that fun, treat your stomach to some Victorian-themed gastronomic delights in the Hannah dining suite.

The event runs from 11am to 5pm, from Good Friday to Easter Monday. Admission costs £8 for adults, £7 for children and £30 for families and tickets are valid for the entire four-day event. For more information call 01843 842168 or visit www.quexmuseum.org.

More traditional Easter fun is on offer at Walmer Castle (pictured), where children are invited to try out some timeless games.

Tasty treats will be on offer for any young visitors who can complete the Easter trail, but they must hop, skip and jump their way around the grounds to discover the clues. If they successfully unscramble the mystery, they will earn some tempting chocolate morsels to take home with them.

Find out how much fun can be had with old-fashioned games, as youngsters are invited to test their balance in the egg and spoon race or see how fast they can complete the wheelbarrow race.

Parents will not recognise their little lambs once they have been transformed into Easter characters by the talented face-painters, who use their magic to turn children into fantastic creatures. A storyteller will guide families around the castle grounds relating wonderful

Egg-citement includes treasure hunts, bonnet workshops, baby animals and story-telling



tales of fairies and folklore. Opening hours are 10am to 5pm each day. Tickets cost £7/£6 for adults, £3.50 for children and £17.50 for families. Admission is free for English Heritage members. For more information call 0870 333 1183 or visit www.english-heritage.org.uk.

The National Trust has joined forces with Cadbury's to create this year's Easter Egg Trails and this time, they take the theme of ancient woodland. Tree-inspired trails can be

enjoyed at South Foreland Lighthouse on Good Friday and Easter Saturday, followed by another at the White Cliffs of Dover on Easter Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday.

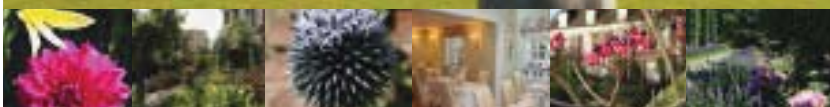
The events run from 11am to 3.30pm on all days and trail sheets cost £1 at South Foreland Lighthouse and £1.50 at the White Cliffs of Dover.

For more information call 01304 202756 or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk.



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IMAGINE... THE BEATLES

Saturday, April 3, Granville Theatre, Ramsgate



CLOSE your eyes and imagine it is the swinging 60s as a top Beatles tribute band comes to Thanet.

Imagine... The Beatles is an astonishingly authentic tribute group that brings the sound of the Fab Four back to the live arena.

Not only does the band capture the true sound of the legendary musicians, but they also strive to recreate the excitement of those golden years.

They match their highly authentic presentation with live songs performed in the original key, which they claim are so convincing, audiences could close their eyes and imagine themselves to be in the presence of the real thing.

With a massive repertoire featuring all the Beatles' best-loved songs, any concert is sure to include a good selection of favourite hits. From the upbeat fun of Help! to the poignant optimism of Hey Jude, Imagine... The Beatles pays a stunning tribute to arguably the world's most famous band.

The show starts at 8pm and tickets cost £10/£9 in advance or £12/£10 on the door. To book call the box office on 01843 591750.



THE BOY FRIEND

Friday, April 2 to Monday, April 5, Memorial Theatre, Broadstairs



THE romance and warmth of the French Riviera are brought to the Kent stage in musical comedy, The Boy Friend.

Stardust Theatre Company brings Sandy Wilson's popular story to life in a production that is sure to fill everyone with the spirit of spring. Featuring lots of catchy songs and a bright, funny storyline, The Boy Friend is the perfect Easter theatrical treat.

Set during the Roaring 20s, the story follows a group of young women who are preparing for a fancy dress ball.

Although young Polly has made up a boyfriend, she feels

left out as the event approaches, but a fateful encounter could turn everything around.

Directed by Joe Hodges, the show features a full orchestra conducted by Myles Ratcliffe. Performances start at 7.30pm on Good Friday, Saturday and Easter Monday, with 2.30pm matinees on Saturday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday.

Tickets cost £8 for Sarah Thorne Theatre Club members and £10 for non-members, who must book at least 24 hours in advance. Call 0845 262 6263 or email info@sarahthorne-theatreclub.co.uk to reserve.

MAGICAL FAERIE FESTIVAL

Saturday, April 3 to Monday, April 5
Canterbury City Centre

EXPERIENCE a truly magical Easter with the return of the Magical Faerie Festival this weekend.

Whether you believe in magic or not, the city centre will have an enchanted feeling as the UK's largest faerie event celebrates the miracle of spring, nature and childhood. After the Faerie Ball at Abode on Good Friday, the festival truly gets underway with the colourful High Street parade outside the Westgate Hall at 10am on Saturday. Featuring giants, drummers, faerie dancers, elves and a real-life Viking, this striking parade will be led by the Chief Faerie.

Special guests from around the world will be taking part in the three-day family event, which is packed with performances and workshops. Guests include Priscilla Hernandez from Spain, Laurel Airica from the US and the UK's own Tim Wheeler. With more than 70 stalls to browse, visitors to the Westgate Hall will find a huge variety of gifts and pixie items to buy, plus work by more than 20 artists.

Tickets cost £6/£3. To find out more visit www.magicalfestivals.co.uk or call 07845 438340.



ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND



Saturday, April 3, Tom Thumb Theatre, Cliftonville

DISAPPEAR down the rabbit hole and embark on some magical Adventures in Wonderland.

Enjoy this wonderful family show for free this weekend as Tom Thumb Theatre and Scandalmonsters Theatre Company present the classic tale, in association with Theatre Royal Margate. As Tim Burton's vision of Alice in Wonderland delights cinemagoers, this stage production will enchant audiences as it takes place inside and outside the Tom Thumb Theatre.

Scandalmonsters will take the show on a national tour next year, so this is a great opportunity to see the production free in a local venue.

The audience will be enchanted as Alice tells her amazing tales and joins the Mad Hatter for the world's oddest tea party.

Bring a picnic and settle down for this family show that runs from 11am to 3pm.

The Tom Thumb Theatre is also offering Play in a Day events on Wednesday, April 7 for children aged 11 and above, followed by an event for ages seven to 11 on Saturday, April 10. Admission costs £20.

To find out more call 01843 221791 or email info@tomthumbtheatre.co.uk.



A GREAT DEAL OF DANCE



Various dates, Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury

TAKE the opportunity to enjoy A Great Deal of Dance at the Gulbenkian this spring.

Dance enthusiasts can see three fantastic shows for £30, taking in ballet and contemporary dance.

The series starts with Ballet Central this Thursday, when they bring their 25th anniversary tour to Canterbury, performing a selection of ballet, contemporary and jazz pieces.

On Thursday, April 29, the Northern School of

Contemporary Dance returns with its postgraduate performance company, Verve. Featuring works by top international choreographers, their bill is sure to appeal to a variety of tastes.

More emerging talent will be on display when EDge performs on Thursday, May 6. As the postgraduate performance company of London Contemporary Dance School, EDge features young dancers just starting out.

Tickets usually cost £12, but A Great Deal of Dance offers all three shows for £30, a saving of £6. Book online at www.gulbenkiantheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01227 769075.

Nanny McPhee is an angel in disguise – warts and all

■ BY DAMON SMITH

RELEASED in 2005, the original Nanny McPhee was a strong successor to Mary Poppins in every way.

Adapted from the Nurse Matilda books by Christianna Brand, the film pitted seven mischievous tykes against an ugly woman with a snaggle tooth, warts and an oversized nose, who had a few tricks up her sleeve when it came to childcare.

Susanna White's colourful sequel casts an even more bewitching spell, introducing the mysterious nanny to a family in crisis in wartime Britain.

Nanny McPhee & The Big Bang is a glorious romp that once again demonstrates Emma Thompson's magical touch in front of and behind the camera.

As screenwriter, she crafts believable, funny and endearing characters, whose plights move us to laughter and tears as the plot twists and turns in unexpected directions.

In her guise as the eponymous guardian angel, Thompson underlines the central message about inner beauty with another sparkling performance. Also, she gels wonderfully with her young co-stars, who capture the emotional distress of children who are separated from their military-bound fathers.

While her husband (Ewan McGregor) is away at war, Mrs Green (Maggie Gyllenhaal) valiantly takes care of the farm with her three children, Norman, Megsie and Vincent.

When she's not tending the homestead, Mrs Green earns a little money in the village shop, run by doddering Mrs Docherty (Dame Maggie Smith).

Chaos ensues when snooty, well-to-do cousins Cyril and Celia come to stay and take an immediate dislike to the rest of the brood.

"We have come from far away – from the



BEWITCHING: Emma Thompson presents a strong message about inner beauty in her role as Nanny McPhee

land of soap and indoor toilets," announces Cyril.

"Kill the townies and eat their heads!" scream the farm children.

Thankfully, Nanny McPhee (Emma Thompson) arrives in the nick of time and uses her special walking stick to show the little brats that the best way to overcome any problem is to work together.

Meanwhile, Mrs Green's brother Phil (Rhys Ifans) schemes to get his sister to sell the farm

so he can pay off his spiralling debts and avoid a beating from Miss Topsey and hulking sidekick, Miss Turvey.

Nanny McPhee & The Big Bang is a treat for kids big and small, striking just the right balance between cuteness and heart-tugging sentiment, not least when Cyril heads to London to beg his father (Ralph Fiennes) for a favour.

Smith, Ifans and the demented double-act of Miss Topsey and Miss Turvey provide unadulterated comic relief, aided by a litter of syn-

VIEW THIS PREVIEW



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chronised swimming pigs. Young actors impress with their timing and cry convincingly in pivotal scenes.

The explosive ending leaves a lump in the throat that keeps the barn door open for another visit from the enigmatic governess.

NANNY MCPHEE AND THE BIG BANG 
Certificate U



COUNTRYSIDE CURES: Botanist and smiling home pharmacist James Wong



YOUR TV REVIEW

GROW YOUR OWN DRUGS: BBC2, 8pm, Tuesday
THE DELICIOUS MISS DAHL: BBC2, 8.30pm, Tuesday

■ BY TOM BETTS

I'M MORE at home with a packet of Rennies than a homemade remedy when it comes to shifting gut rot.

It's borne out of convenience more than choice, but that's the way life is for most of us, yet I find Grow Your Own Drugs totally mesmerising.

Beaming from ear-to-ear ethnobotanist James Wong strides out into the countryside to do his fair share of leaf sniffing and flower stroking.

Then he fills his boots with nature's bounty, to knock up potions galore.

He reckons the cures to a million ills can be blended simply using what can be found in the British countryside, and who am I to argue?

As interesting and strangely calming as this is, you have to wonder how many people are knocking up their own anti-dandruff oil, as the processes he goes through seem hugely time-consuming.

There's never a shortage of cookery shows on TV, and the latest to bubble its way on to our screens is The Delicious Miss Dahl, with the latest would-be sexy domestic goddess, Sophie Dahl.

The granddaughter of renowned children's author Roald Dahl has swapped the catwalk for the kitchen, and gone all Nigella on us.

I'm just not sure it is very convincing.

Each cookery segment is neatly titled with a Quentin Blake-esque illustration, much like the chapters of one of her grandfather's books, but it's a touch which only exaggerates the fact that this is all style over substance.

The recipes seem great, but our

host seems rather wooden and over-awed by the whole thing. I'm just not convinced she has the chemistry to carry a show in which she is the only person to appear on screen.

I'm writing this off the back of the first show, and perhaps things will get a little sharper, but in parts of the first episode it was painfully stilted.

She may be pretty as a picture but Sophie, all batting eyelashes and muddled blonde locks, seems less at home with the camera than you would think for someone used to strutting down the runway.

At times it seemed as if she had completely ground to a halt, and you wondered if someone had put her on pause while the visuals continued to play.

This is a six part series, but I'll wager it will be the only six parts we do see.

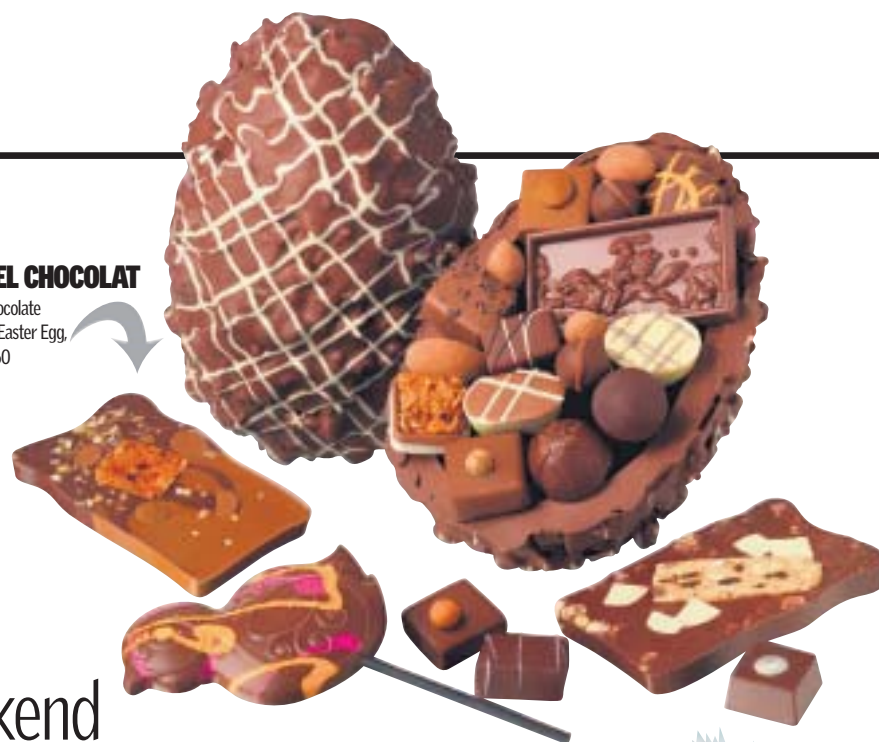
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Easter delights

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HOTEL CHOCOLAT

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Easter hamper, price £30

HOTEL CHOCOLAT

Milk Chocolate Happy Egg
& Tiddly Pot, price £6



HOTEL CHOCOLAT

Nibble & Peck's Easter
Chocolate Hunt, price £8



CLINTONS

Boofle Plush with
Egg Tag, price £8.99

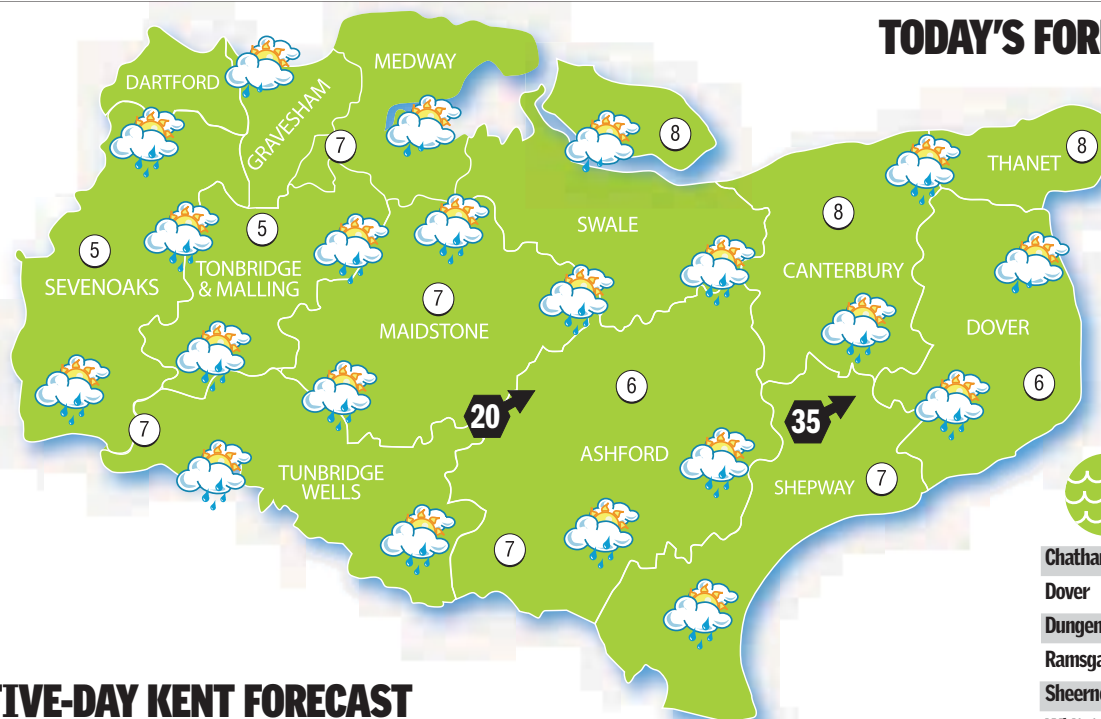
Boofle Plush with
Daffodil, price £8.99



HOTEL CHOCOLAT

Eggs & Soldiers,
price £6.50





TODAY'S FORECAST



AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY




Amsterdam	11°C	Madrid	14°C
Athens	18°C	New York	7°C
Barcelona	15°C	Paris	16°C
Beijing	12°C	Rome	16°C
Bombay	32°C	Sydney	28°C
Cape Town	23°C	Tenerife	23°C
Cardiff	10°C	Tokyo	7°C
Gibraltar	19°C	Vancouver	11°C
Hong Kong	20°C	Warsaw	11°C
Las Palmas	22°C	Wellington	18°C



KENT'S WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Chatham	Saturday	4:25pm 59m	Sunday	5:03pm 5.6m
Dover	Saturday	2:41pm 6.4m	Sunday	3:22pm 6.1m
Dungeness	Saturday	2:41pm 7.3m	Sunday	3:22pm 6.9m
Ramsgate	Saturday	3:11pm 4.9m	Sunday	3:52pm 4.7m
Sheerness	Saturday	4:15pm 5.6m	Sunday	4:53pm 5.4m
Whitstable	Saturday	4:24pm 5.1m	Sunday	4:58pm 4.9m

FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon																Whitstable		Saturday	4:24pm 5.1m		Sunday	4:58pm 4.9m	
Ashford	10°C	9°C	10°C	10°C	10°C	Dover	9°C	6°C	8°C	9°C	9°C	Gravesend	12°C	8°C	10°C	10°C	11°C	Sevenoaks	8°C	6°C	8°C	8°C	9°C		SUNRISE	6.33am	SUNSET	7.27pm
Canterbury	10°C	9°C	10°C	10°C	10°C	Faversham	10°C	9°C	9°C	9°C	9°C	Maidstone	11°C	8°C	9°C	10°C	11°C	Sittingbourne	10°C	9°C	9°C	9°C	9°C					
Chatham	10°C	9°C	9°C	9°C	9°C	Folkestone	9°C	6°C	8°C	9°C	9°C	Ramsgate	10°C	9°C	10°C	10°C	10°C	Tonbridge	10°C	8°C	9°C	10°C	10°C		MOONRISE	9.59pm	MOONSET	6.31am
Dartford	12°C	8°C	10°C	10°C	11°C	Gillingham	10°C	9°C	9°C	9°C	9°C	Rochester	10°C	9°C	9°C	9°C	9°C	Tun Wells	10°C	8°C	9°C	10°C	10°C					



 **SUNRISE** 6.33am **SUNSET** 7.27pm



MOONRISE 9.59pm **MOONSET** 6.31am


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A photograph of a person wearing a purple shirt, aiming a rifle. The background is a dense green forest.

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bundle of Egyptian cotton towels, a hooded towel for babies/young toddlers, a plush Cushelle koala toy, a set of bath towels and a pack of Cushelle toilet tissue – we have two sets to giveaway.

To enter, simply answer the question below and send your entry on a postcard along with your email address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime telephone number to Cushelle Competition, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

The closing date is April 25, 2010.

No purchase necessary

Question: What is a baby koala called?

a) Puppy b) Joey c) Kitten

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If you do not wish to receive any literature please write 'no literature' on your entry.



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INSTRUMENTAL KINGS: UpC DownC are one of four bands at the Command House

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

RECESSION-busting plug of the week; see four top bands for just £3.

The inarguably impressive value-for-money promo takes place at the Command House, Chatham, on Saturday, April 10 and features UpC DownC, Let Our Enemies Beware, Bela Lugosi Blues and Delta Sleep.

That equates to 75p per band. To put it another way, you can see four headline slot-worthy acts for the price of a pint of Guinness.

For the price of two pints of Guinness you could see the bands and enjoy a pint of Guinness.

First up on the night are Canterbury post-rockers Delta Sleep, formerly known as Savlon.

The five-piece are among the county's leading crowd-paralysers – the kind of left-field band that produce six-minute mini epics that leave an audience so mind-mangled and enthralled that they are incapable of any movement beyond a rhythmic head nod or foot tap.

They're jangly yet soothing.

Next up is mostly-Medway-based rockers Bela Lugosi Blues, led by former Barbs and What Would Jesus Drive frontman Tim Box.

The polished quartet belie their age. Despite only forming last year, the outfit has put together a number of chart-worthy tracks, with What You Advertise standing out in particular.

Let Our Enemies Beware will crank the guitar levels up a notch when they follow the Blues on stage.

The Medway post-punk rockers are much more than your average three-guitar 'metal' outfits, yo-yoing from prolonged dark instrumentals to intricate, almost calming 30-second fills.

Their debut album, *Against Karate*, was released last year to critical acclaim and was even backed by irritating straggly-bearded Kiwi DJ/VJ Zane Lowe.

Topping the night off are instrumental kings UpC DownC.

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yourkenttv.co.uk



Ben Jukes performs Keano's song Everybody's Changing



Belleville perform at the Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury



TOP FIVE KENT GIGS

- 1 Happy Daze - 3/4 Canterbury Conservative Club
- 2 Rogues Down - 5/4 The Forum Tunbridge Wells
- 3 Save Target As - 6/4 Kent Uni Canterbury
- 4 A Thousand Lights - 9/4 King Edward VII Margate
- 5 Craig Sheridan - 10/4 The Alma Deal

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UTTER RELAXATION: Slip between the hot tub and the pool as you are transported from one glamorous destination to the next

yourgetaways

Enjoy the good life as you take in highlights of Med

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

AS FAR as earth-shattering epiphanies go, the realisation that laid-back ocean cruises are one of life's greatest offerings is among my least profound.

After all, it's a bit of a given that being slowly sailed across the seas on a luxury cruise liner is somewhat of a pleasant getaway.

The first clue is in the price tag.

Nevertheless, the penny finally dropped for me on day three.

It was about 4pm, and we were sailing from Madeira to Malaga, southern Spain, and I was soaking up the sun in a poolside hot tub.

As I watched the world go by I realised that cruise holidays are almost entirely decision-free, and consequently almost entirely stress-free.

All the run-of-the-mill holiday concerns are taken out of your hands.

There is no need to fret about where to go, how you are going to get there, what to do about food and many more mundane issues besides that stand in the way between you and utter relaxation.

On a cruise, the ship's captain and his dotting staff are expected to take care of these potential problems, leaving you with nothing more taxing to ponder than pool or hot tub.

And so it proved for me on NCL's nine-night Canary Islands and Morocco fly-cruise, which starts and ends in Barcelona, Spain.

I and a four-strong contingent of fellow journalists joined the 14-deck Norwegian Jade cruise liner in Gran Canaria, replacing five other

FACT FILE:

Time difference	+One hour
Language	English
Currency	US dollar

Norwegian Jade's nine-night Canary Islands and Morocco fly cruise always departs on a Friday. Available dates for this year are: April 9 and December 3 and 24.

Next year ships will set sail on January 14, February 4 and 25, March 18 and April 8.

The cruise is as follows: Fly UK/Barcelona, Casablanca Agadir, Las Palmas, Funchal, Malaga (Granada), Barcelona, Fly UK.

Prices start from £849 (based on flights from Heathrow, and on two sharing). For more information visit www.ncl.co.uk or call 0845 201900.

reporters who had been treated to the first half of the Mediterranean round trip.

As we headed for our first stop, the isolated island of Madeira, I took my first look at my new floating home.

The giant vessel contains living quarters for 2,400 guests and a further 1,000 staff, a dozen restaurants, theatre, bars, gym, spa, basketball court, sun deck, casino, and – for the highest of high-spenders – a private, secluded suntrap, plunge pool and hot tub.

Despite carrying a combined population of 3,400 people, the ship's impressive design and layout masks this, giving the constant impression

that the vessel is practically empty.

During our cruise we were treated to pre-dinner drinks in a number of the ship's open lounge bars, where we were entertained by a range of experienced musicians and performers, before dining in a number of the cover-charged restaurants.

Entertainment continues through the night in the form of live bands, theatre shows, stand-up comedians and a nightly disco.

Away from the fine dining, drinking and dancing, we enjoyed brief soirees ashore in Madeira, Malaga and finally Barcelona.

Madeira enjoys a slower pace of life, with small town centre streets winding around bustling markets and churches on their way to the seafloor.

Our deepest journey inland came in Malaga, when we took a minibus to the stunning Nerja caves, discovered 50 years ago by a group of intrepid schoolboys.

Dating back five million years, the caves play host to hundreds of stalagmites and stalactites as well as Palaeolithic wall paintings.

Barcelona, I'm told, is beautiful, however I was only able to catch a glimpse of the city as we were driven directly from the port to the airport for our flight home.

Cruises are calming and give holidaymakers the chance to relax while making short stops at a number of destinations.

Personally, I would have enjoyed at least one night's stay at each stop, in order to take a deeper look inland without fear of missing the boat.

Being a hardy Brit, the ship's US-styled tips and add-ons culture was also unappreciated, but perhaps I'm picking at faults that aren't there.

Cruise life is a good life.

MOTORS NEWS



Special Clio marks the car's 20th anniversary

WAS it really 20 years ago that those Papa and Nicole ads made Britain fall for the Clio?

It was a love affair that Renault needed; its habit of selling cars by numbers – like the Clio's once popular Renault 5 predecessor – wasn't adding up any more.

But then came the lifesaving Clio and its regular place in the UK top-ten sales chart. And, two decades and three Clio generations on, that pivotal moment is being celebrated with a Clio '20th' special edition from £14,671.



Return from the dead as Saab unveil new 9-5

ORDER books are open for the car that marks Saab's return from the dead.

Production had stopped at the Swedish car icon's plant after former parent General Motors had decided to cut its losses, but a rescue plan involving Dutch supercar maker Spyker, means the new Saab 9-5 executive model will live after all.

Prices start from £26,495 for the well-specified 2.0TiD 160PS Vector SE model, which makes it competitive in the premium executive saloon sector, while flagship Aero models are from £31,495.



Skoda's happy swapping to keep buyers' interest

SCRAPPAGE is finished so carmakers are hunting desperately for new wheezes to keep sales momentum going in the wake of the Government-backed incentive to swap old cars for new ones.

Skoda's answer is 'Happy Swapping': vehicles with a '52 registration or older can be swapped to get a minimum of £2,000 off a new Skoda, which could be a Fabia supermini from £7,340 or the executive class Superb from £14,165. The car simply needs to have a valid MOT certificate, tax, insurance and be driveable.



FLEXIBLE FRIEND: General Motors has flexed every cabin 'muscle' in search of giving its Vauxhall arm versatility and added storage and is shown off beautifully in the new Astra

Flexing its cabin muscles gives Astra real appeal

ROAD TEST VAUXHALL ASTRA

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

The 'Watts linkage' on the rear suspension counters lateral pressures when cornering hard and all Astras I've driven so far tempt this and with confidence.

It underlines Vauxhall's intent to shift into the more demanding private sector rather than the big volume/low margin fleet sector that was its preferred habitat.

The car feels huge inside; a long wheelbase and a dashboard set well away from front passengers makes you believe you are in a car from the class above while cleverly shaped rear windows suggest a racy downswept roofline yet there is ample rear headroom.

However, I mark it slightly below the less visually arresting VW Golf for ultimate refinement and handling plus snob appeal, reflected by higher projected used values for the German car.

Despite generous standard kit, Astra list prices are also unrealistic.

They start from £16,000 and the flagship spec 1.7 (125PS/123bhp with 60mpg average) CDTi Elite diesel test car costs £22,415 officially, for instance.

I don't even need to ask dealers whether they want to read that fairy tale to customers, but you might ask them for the real story.



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BY STEVE LOADER @
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What Car? magazine has given the new Superb Estate an excellent write-up in its first review, calling the car "big, comfortable, plush and fine value".

The magazine was particularly impressed by the value-for-money offered by the Superb Estate, saying it's, "cracking value and undercuts the equivalent Mondeo Estate by thousands."



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We've reduced the prices of all Fabia and Octavia until 31st March 2010, which means it's like not having to pay the VAT. That's a saving of up to £2,110.43† on Fabia and £3,388.30† on an Octavia.



Time is running out to get up to **£3,500*** off a new Škoda.

Used Car Section

Skoda Octavia 2.0 T FSI vRS 5-Dr Hatchback Mar 2006

Black Metallic 43,200 miles * Manual Petrol £9,795

Skoda Fabia 2 1.4 TDI PD (80 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback Jan 2008

Beige Metallic 24,700 miles * Manual Diesel £7,995

Skoda Fabia 1.4 16V Ambiente (75 HP) 5-Dr Estate Feb 2007

Brilliant Silver Metallic 22,473 miles * Automatic Petrol £7,495

Skoda Fabia 1 1.2 HTP 6V (60 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback Dec 2007

Brilliant Silver Metallic 11,572 miles * Manual Petrol £6,995

Skoda Fabia 1 1.2 HTP 6V (60 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback Dec 2007

Beige Metallic 25,400 miles * Manual Petrol £6,795

Skoda Fabia 1.2 HTP Ambiente 5-Dr Hatchback Mar 2007

Beige Metallic 21,200 miles * Manual Petrol £5,995

Skoda Fabia 1.4 16V Comfort (75 HP) 5-Dr Estate Feb 2004

Graphite Grey Metallic 48,500 miles * Automatic Petrol £4,995

Other Makes

SEAT Toledo 1.9 TDI PD Stylance 5-Door Hatchback Sep 2006

Nayara Blue Metallic 20,695 miles * Manual Diesel £8,495

Vauxhall Astra 1.6 Club 16v 5-Door Hatchback Dec 2006

Silver Lightning Metallic 33,364 miles * Manual Petrol £6,995

Vauxhall Astra 1.8 16v Design 5-Door Estate Jan 2005

Metro Blue Metallic 29,700 miles * Automatic Petrol £6,495

SEAT Alhambra 1.9 TDI PD SE (130 BHP) 5-Door MPV Nov 2003

Pearl Blue Metallic 92,500 miles * Manual Diesel £6,295

SEAT Ibiza 1.2 12v Reference Sport 3-Door Hatchback Apr 2007

Black Magic Metallic 40,055 miles * Manual Petrol £6,295

Vauxhall Astra 1.8 Life 16v 5-Door Hatchback Jan 2005

Metro Blue Metallic 67,500 miles * Automatic Petrol £4,995

Citroen C3 Pluriel 1.6 2-Door Cabriolet Jan 2004

Artic Steel Metallic 86,467 miles * Manual Petrol £4,495

Vauxhall Agila 1.0 Expression 5-Door Hatchback Aug 2006

Royal Blue Metallic 17,376 miles * Manual Petrol £4,295

Suzuki Wagon R 1.3 GL 75 BHP 5-Door Hatchback Mar 2002

Bright Red 39,350 miles * Manual Petrol £3,995

Renault Megane 1.4 Fidji 5-Dr Hatchback Jul 2002

Platinum Metallic 32,232 miles * Manual Petrol £3,295

Renault Scenic 1.6 Expression + 5-Dr Hatchback Apr 2001

Norse Grey Metallic 71,500 miles * Automatic Petrol £2,795

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Offer available on all Fabia and Octavia models ordered before 31st March 2010 at participating retailers only. Reduction applied to the RRP including factory fitted optional extras and is equivalent of the VAT applicable at the time. VAT is applicable and will be shown on the customer's invoice. †Savings shown relate to RRP's of the Fabia Scout 1.9 TDI PD 105bhp and the Octavia L&K estate 2.0 TDI PD 140bhp DSG. Excludes the channel islands. Prices are accurate at time of print. Offer is not available in conjunction with the Government's scrappage scheme. *£2,500 saving off the RRP is available across the full Skoda range with up to an additional £1,000 off the RRP on selected Octavia models dependent on the vehicle meeting the full Government scrappage incentive criteria. The Government scrappage payment applies to vehicles registered on or before 29th February 2000 when traded-in against a new car subject to conditions. Not available in conjunction with any other offer. Terms & Conditions apply. Offer is subject to availability and may be varied or withdrawn at any time. At participating retailers only. Please see your local retailer for full terms and conditions. Prices are accurate at time of print. Model shown Superb Estate Elegance 2.0 TDI CR 140bhp 6spd DPF at £24,280 RRP inc optional metallic paint at £410 RRP. Tinted windows not to UK specification. *Specification shown is standard on Elegance and optional on SE models only.

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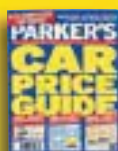
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PROPERTY NEWS

Overpaying could save you a fortune

Steve Osborne, The Mortgage Man, shares his knowledge with you in this new fortnightly column



EVERYONE likes to save money, but not everyone takes the opportunity to save huge sums of money by taking advantage of low interest rates.

If "every cloud has a silver lining", then while low rates are clearly bad news for savers they really are great news for borrowers, many of whom may not have realised quite how good that news is.

If you are one of those people who respond to falling mortgage costs simply by spending money on going out more often or booking a holiday, you are missing the chance to save tens of thousands of pounds in the longer term.

Smart borrowers have realised that not only can they enjoy reduced monthly outgoings in the short term, but they can also clear the mortgage faster and save a sizeable amount of interest by making overpayments.

And I'm not talking about a few hundred pounds here.

For many borrowers the rate payable now is much less than the rate they were quoted when the mortgage was taken out, so you could even argue that they are effectively paying off their mortgage faster at no extra cost.

For an 'average mortgage' of, say, £100,000 at a rate of 6 per cent, an additional payment of £100 per month will shorten your mortgage term by about six years and save you about £27,000. Yes, £27,000 – just for continuing to pay what you had already got used to paying before rates fell.

I do not expect low rates to be around forever, so, like diets and other resolutions, the sooner you start the better.

Different lenders have different rules about making overpayments, so it's important to seek professional financial advice before proceeding. But please, don't be put off.

The path to big savings is fairly simple and trouble-free; you might even be able to move your mortgage to a lower rate and save even more than you thought.

Steve Osborne - Director
The Mortgage Company
Ashford



Lenders 'must take risks to kick-start the market'

■ BY NICK AMES

PROPERTY analysts say lenders must take more risks with their capital to boost the market.

They say that too many are too cautious, as they do not want to see themselves losing out financially.

Timothy Lambert, head of consulting at property investment consultancy Ducaliam, explained that mortgage lenders were obliged to provide more loans, but were being very careful.

"With a change of government likely within four months, lenders are also wary of fixed-rate mortgages as interest rates can only go one way and inflation is starting to rise fast," he said.

Many people were also conscious of the possibility of a double-dip recession, Mr Lambert added, calling the mortgage-market picture "artificial" because of these factors.

Mortgage-lending would recover in time, but only when confidence returned to lenders, he concluded.

Figures from the Council of Mortgage Lenders show that gross lending fell to about £9.1 billion last month, a decline of almost a third on December's level of £13.4 billion.

The current trends in lending have also come under the microscope as experts seek to predict movements within the property market in the coming months.

Property purchases are likely to be at a lower level in the first few months of 2010, following a boost in December when buyers move to take advantage of the stamp duty concession, said Bernard Clarke, spokesman for the Council of Mortgage Lenders.

"We are still in a market in which it is not as competitive as it was and those circumstances will only improve very slowly," he said.

Mr Clarke called for measures to address the shortage of mortgage funding, pointing out that recovery in the property market would be slow if the £300 billion shortfall was not made up.

More than half – 58 per cent – of mortgage brokers expect to see an increase in business in the first three months of this year, research from Paragon Mortgages has revealed. On average, they are predicting a rise of 7.1 per cent.



Fall in prices spark fears of double dip recession

HOUSE prices dropped in March month on month from February for the first time on record.

March has always marked the beginning of the spring increase in property values, but the Halifax and Nationwide Building Societies both reported a drop in house prices this month.

"There are fears of a double-dip recession in the housing market, but LetAssured UK believes that February's drop was fuelled by

mortgage unavailability and the continuing cold weather which restricted activity," said David Plaister, of LetAssured UK.

"The weather conditions in January and February undoubtedly had a bearing on activity," said the chief economist at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Simon Rubinsohn.

"Prices will go up over the next three to six months and then they might stabilise.

"Interest rates may rise in the fourth quar-

ter of this year. That could arrest the upward move in prices and begin to backtrack towards the end of 2010," he added.

"LetAssured is still advising its clients that there are realistic property prices for the shrewd buy-to-let investor who researches his properties and agent correctly.

"Current asking prices linked to sensible mortgage products should stand investors in good stead and compensate for any future hikes in interest rates."

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Three bedroom terraced house in central Herne Bay. Has been refurbished and offer a light airy family home. 200 yards from Herne Bay Primary School.



CENTRAL, HERNE BAY £185,000

Victorian terrace house located in a central position on the edge of the main High Street and very close to the sea front. Offering 3 bedrooms,



CENTRAL, HERNE BAY £187,500

Vacant end of terrace Victorian house close to all amenities just off the High Street and sea front. Features gas central heating, double glazing.



BELTINGE, HERNE BAY £299,000

4 bedroom detached house in quiet location on the east side of town close to the Village of Beltinge. Close to local shops and 'bus route to town centre and Canterbury.



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EAST CLIFF, HERNE BAY £235,000

Vacant 2/3 bedroom detached bungalow, located in a popular residential area on the east side of the town, good size garden.



HERNE, HERNE BAY £159,950

Vacant semi-detached cottage style property located on the outskirts of town on the border of the Village of Herne.



EAST CLIFF, HERNE BAY £235,000

Vacant 2 bedroom detached bungalow on wide corner plot located in an east central position within walking distance of local shops and 'bus route to town.



HERNE, HERNE BAY £124,995

Modern end of terrace 1 bedroom house located on the outskirts of Herne Bay, within walking distance of Herne Village. Offered with no forward chain.



CENTRAL, HERNE BAY £99,950

A one bedroom second floor managed apartment in conveniently situated just off Herne Bay sea front.



SOUTH, HERNE BAY £225,000

Situated in a cul-de-sac this two bedroom bungalow is light and airy. The rear garden is of manageable size, the drive to the detached garage offers ample off road parking.

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New Romney

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New Romney: 01797 364600



New Romney

**SOLD
STC**

New Romney: 01797 364600



Greatstone

**SOLD
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Littlestone

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27-29 Castle Street, Dover, Kent CT16 1PT e: dover@tersons.com**New Romney: 01797 364600****New Romney Sales****Lydd** from £90,000

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- 1 & 2 Beds
- Town Location

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**Littlestone** £135,000

- Ground Floor Apartment
- 2 Bedrooms
- Good Location

New Romney: 01797 364600

**New Romney** £159,995

- 2 Bedroom Terrace
- Close to Town
- Lounge, Dining, Kitchen & Utility

New Romney: 01797 364600

**New Romney** £219,995

- 3 Bed Detached House
- Ideal Family Home
- Close to High Street

New Romney: 01797 364600

**Greatstone** £230,000

- 3 Bedroom Bungalow
- Well Presented
- Views to Rear

New Romney: 01797 364600

**Lydd** £299,995

- Detached Period Home
- Possible Annexe
- 3 Bedrooms

New Romney: 01797 364600

Contact our New Romney Office 01797 364600 e: newromney@tersons.com

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GOLDEN VALLEY £177,500

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03157

- 3 bed end of terrace
- Off road parking and garage
- No chain



CHERITON £132,500

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03215

- 3 bedroom terrace
- In need of TLC
- No onward chain



WEST END £129,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP02994

- New 2 bedroom apartment
- Large rooms
- No chain



FOLKESTONE £109,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03216

- 1 bed apartment
- Good location
- Large living area



FOLKESTONE £184,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03191

- 3 bed semi-detached
- In need of modernisation
- No onward chain



CHERITON £149,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03222

- 3 bedroom end terrace
- Enclosed rear garden
- No onward chain



FOLKESTONE £145,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03217

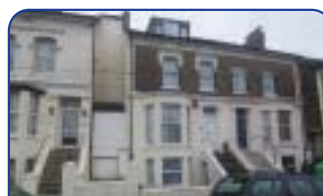
- 3 bed terraced house
- Kitchen/diner
- GFCH/DG



FOLKESTONE £235,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03123

- 3 bedroom first floor apartment
- Lounge/Diner
- Shower room and bathroom



DOVER £189,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP02915

- 3 X apartments
- Currently rented @ £1360/pcm
- No chain



DOVER £159,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03111

- Three bedroom semi detached
- Off street parking
- No chain



DOVER £235,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03200

- 4/5 bed detached house
- 3/4 reception rooms
- Approx. 120ft rear garden



CHERITON £194,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03211

- Superb 3 bedroom terrace
- Garage and parking
- No chain



FOLKESTONE £89,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP02972

- 2 bedroom apartment
- Superb throughout
- No chain



HAWKINGE £299,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03187

- 4 bedroom detached
- 3 bathrooms
- Off road parking & garage



DOVER £135,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03169

- Large lounge/diner
- Good size garden
- Very quiet location



BROADMEAD VILLAGE £279,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03147

- Superb 4 bedroom link detached
- 3 receptions, fitted kitchen
- OSP/single garage



FOLKESTONE £220,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP02270

- Very large apartment in West End location
- Two bedrooms/Two reception rooms
- Study/Own private rear garden



THE METROPOLE £275,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03154

- 3 bed town house
- Top spec modernisation
- Stamp duty paid!!



FOLKESTONE £79,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03201

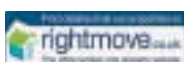
- First Floor Flat
- Share of Freehold
- Vacant, keys for viewing



FOLKESTONE £134,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP02515

- 4 Bedroom family home
- 2 Receptions, modern kitchen
- Well presented, call to view



CAPEL LE FERNE £184,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03121

- 3 bed end terrace
- Large rear garden
- Off road parking



TOWN CENTRE £89,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP02909

- One bedroom apartment
- Newly built
- No chain



FOLKESTONE £120,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03141

- Currently a 4 bedroom house
- Planning permission to extend
- Potential investment!



DOVER £189,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03176

- 4 bed semi detached house
- Garage
- Approx 55ft rear garden

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DOVER
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SANDGATE £499,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03206

- 4 bedroom detached house
- Superb contemporary design
- Sea views and no chain



FOLKESTONE £174,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03039

- 4 Bedroom terraced
- Superb decorative order
- Large rooms



CHERITON £135,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03138

- 3 bed semi detached
- Needs modernisation
- Front and rear gardens



SANDGATE £104,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03120

- 1 bedroom flat
- No chain
- GFCH



SANDGATE £224,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03149

- 3 bedroom terraced
- High spec renovation
- Roof terrace/No chain



HOMEPINE HOUSE £114,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03098

- 2 bedroom apartment
- Private balcony
- Retirement apartment



HYTHE £259,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03053

- 6 bedroom terraced
- GCH/garden
- Conservatory



FOLKESTONE £135,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03171

- 23ft lounge/diner
- 3 bedrooms
- Quiet cul-de-sac location, no chain

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FOLKESTONE OIEO £124,950

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03156

- NO CHAIN
- 1/2 bed apartment
- Private garden



FOLKESTONE £214,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03207

- 5 bedroom semi
- 2 reception rooms
- Enclosed rear garden



SANDGATE £109,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP02937

- One bed apartment
- Walking distance to beach
- Off road parking



METROPOLE £159,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03202

- 2 bedroom apartment
- Sea views
- No onward chain



METROPOLE £199,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03089

- 3 bedroom apartment
- Sea views and no chain
- Fully renovated



HAWKINGE £264,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03194

- 5 bedroom semi-detached
- OSP/single garage
- Great size rear garden



DOVER £60,000 - £95,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03162

- Six flats in the heart of the town,
- Studio-2 bed, Newly renovated
- Off road parking/DG/GCH



FOLKESTONE £155,500

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP02930

- Three bedroom semi
- Conservatory
- Garage and driveway



WEST END £129,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03189

- 2 bed apartment
- Parking subject to availability
- No onward chain



WEST END £175,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03060

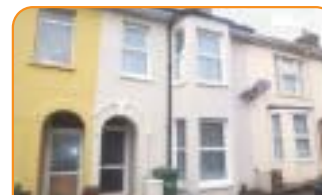
- 3 bed apartment
- Roof terrace
- Fully fitted bar



CAPEL-LE-FERNE £299,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03128

- 3 bed detached bungalow
- No chain
- OSP & single garage



FOLKESTONE £138,000

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03131

- 3 bedroom terrace
- Private rear garden
- GCH/DG



FOLKESTONE £374,995

FOLKESTONE OFFICE HFP03140

- 5 bed detached
- 3 reception rooms
- Sea views

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New Romney 01797 363194

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Dover £169,950

Three double bedroom three storey end of terraced house, situated close to Dover town centre. Corner plot, driveway with off street parking for two vehicles, garage. Shower room, family bathroom, 3 bedrooms

Dover Office

01304 207099



Lydd on Sea £285,000

Four bedroom detached house. Lounge, dining room & kitchen. Conservatory. Ensuite shower to master, bathroom. Garage & off road parking for several cars.

New Romney

01797 363194



Dover £135,000

Geering and Colyer are pleased to offer to market this two double bedroom semi-detached smaller family home situated in the popular residential of Tower Hamlets and having schooling and the town centre within half a mile radius.

Dover Office

01304 207099



Hawkinge £129,995

Two bed semi detached home. Kitchen/diner & bathroom. Garage, garden. C/ heating, d/glazing and would benefit from some modernisation.

Folkestone Office

01303 250757



Whitfield £180,000

2 bedroom detached house, requires modernisation. Driveway provides off street parking for several vehicles, garage. Entrance porch, kitchen, through lounge, first floor landing, two bedrooms and bathroom.

Kearsney Office

01304 823714



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Alkham £439,950

3 bedroom family house stands within 1.5 acres. Lounge with connecting dining room separated by a central fireplace, modern fitted kitchens and bathrooms and a 13' x 10' conservatory. Adjoining field.

Kearsney Office

01304 823714



Greatstone £250,000

Upside down house. Lounge, three bedrooms, bathroom, cloakroom & Kitchen Garage & off road parking.

New Romney

01797 363194



Dover £135,000

Three bedroom family in the popular residential area of Elms Vale. The property offers its new owners a bay fronted lounge with opening to the separate dining room, modern fitted kitchen with shower room off and gardens both front and rear.

Kearsney Office

01304 823714



Lyminge £194,995

Three bed semi detached home. has Fitted kitchen, lounge, dining room cloakroom and fitted bathroom. There is the added benefit of a garage, off street parking, electric storage heaters front and rear gardens.

Folkestone Office

01303 250757



St. Marys Bay £285,000

Detached family house. Lounge/diner, kitchen, utility area, study, downstairs WC, three bedrooms, bathroom. Garage & off road parking.

New Romney

01797 363194

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Folkestone 01303 259211

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folkestone@bairstoweves.co.uk

Countrywide

WHITFIELD,

Dover 01304 201806

£199,950

We are very pleased to introduce to the market this very well presented 3 bedroom detached family home. The property has been updated recently and has a very modern interior.

The property is set out over two floors and comprises a spacious 'L' shaped lounge/diner and a modern kitchen to the ground floor. To the first floor there are two double bedrooms, a substantial single bedroom and family shower room.

The property also boasts a lawned front garden, a very light and airy conservatory overlooking the patio garden to the rear. There is rear access to the property and a garage en bloc with off road parking available.

We would recommend internal viewing to fully appreciate what this property has to offer.



FOLKESTONE,

Folkestone 01303 259211

£215,000

Offered for sale with no chain this 3 bedroom family home is situated in an elevated position in a cul-de-sac in the popular Enbrook area of Sandgate. The property is arranged over three floors with the ground floor being the entrance hall with storage space. The lower ground floor has a lounge diner with patio doors out to a balcony, a modern kitchen and a shower room. The first floor has three bedrooms and a family bathroom. The location is less than a mile from Folkestone West station with its high speed rail link to London. Close by there are well regarded primary and secondary schools and local shops are within easy distance.

Outside there is extensive storage under the house, a garage and additional off road parking. The garden comprises a lawned area and patio.

We strongly advise and early viewing.

FAST START - The seller of this property has opted for our **FAST START** package, making the moving timescale much shorter for you. Call for more details.



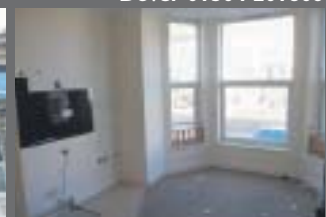
DOVER,

Dover 01304 201806

£129,950

AN EXCELLENT INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY! The property comprises of three one bedroom flats and a self contained one bedroom flat

to the basement floor. The basement flat has access to the rear garden and comprises a lounge with kitchenette area, double bedroom with bay window



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FOLKESTONE,

Folkestone 01303 259211

£149,950

Offered for sale with no forward chain is this three bedroom mid terrace property. To the ground floor of this bay fronted home is a lounge, open through

to dining area and kitchen. On the first floor there is the bathroom and three bedrooms. The property benefits from double glazing and central heating.



WHITFIELD,

Dover 01304 201806

£225,000

This very well presented and spacious detached house needs to be viewed to appreciate the room it offers. The property is set in the popular Newlands

area of Whitfield with easy access to the A2 leading to London and Canterbury and into Dover town itself. It is also close to local amenities.



FOLKESTONE,

Folkestone 01303 259211

£229,950

Detached house with accommodation comprising lounge with double doors out to the garden, an 18'10 dining room, a kitchen breakfast room and a

downstairs cloakroom. Upstairs there are four double bedrooms and a family bathroom. To the rear there is an enclosed and lawned garden.



DOVER,

Dover 01304 201806

£149,950

A FANTASTIC INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY!!! Offered chain free, this terrace property comprises three one bedroom flats on the ground.



DOVER,

Dover 01304 201806

ASKING PRICE £180,000

An excellent investment opportunity! This property is situated in a central part of town close by to the bus and train stations.



FOLKESTONE, Folkestone 01303 259211

£119,995

Viewing is recommended to appreciate this modern top floor flat comprising: entrance hall, fitted kitchen, lounge, two bedrooms and bathroom/WC.



FOLKESTONE, Folkestone 01303 259211

FIXED PRICE £138,000

Two bedroom well presented mid terrace home situated in the sought after Cheriton Area of Folkestone. Accommodation entrance hall, lounge/dining room.



HYTHE,

Folkestone 01303 259211

£350,000

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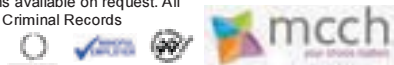
mcch is a charity committed to designing and delivering services to adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs. It's people like you who empower each individual by giving them more independence and continue to be part of society.

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Permanent position

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MOT tester status would be an advantage.

Permanent position

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Both successful candidates have the opportunity to advance within the company
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mail@aaashford.co.uk

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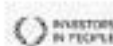


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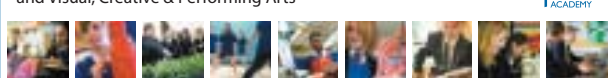
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RUGBY



SLOPPY: Dover errors contributed to rare defeat

Sharks' lack of bite ends in surprise loss

Beckenham 34 Dover 13

UNCHARACTERISTIC errors saw Dover fall to only their fourth defeat of the London 1 South season against in-form Beckenham.

Dover started nervously after making several changes to the side which comfortably beat Aylesford Bulls 56-12 last week.

The Sharks struggled to compete in the line-out and could have fallen behind within the opening two minutes, but a Beckenham penalty clattered against the post.

However, it didn't take long for the hosts to open the scoring as they were gifted a try on eight minutes. A pass meant for Ricky Mackintosh was intercepted and Beckenham stormed down the other end to score a converted try.

Dover responded shortly after and levelled the score with their only try of the afternoon.

The Sharks were awarded a penalty, from which Ben Murray took a quick tap and dived over the line. Blair Charge added the extras.

A Martyn Beaumont penalty then gave Dover the lead and another followed shortly after to make the score 13-7. But a try right on the stroke of half-time gave the hosts a slender lead at the break.

Beckenham made a better start to the second half and quickly re-established their lead with a converted try.

From there on they dominated the game and secured the victory with two further tries and a penalty.

Dover, who are hoping to secure a London 1 South play-off spot, will be aiming to bounce back this Saturday, when they travel to Old Colfeians.

PLEASE SEND YOUR SPORTS STORIES TO SPORTS EDITOR GLENN PEARSON AT glenn.pearson@kosmedia.co.uk



IN FORM: Shaun Welford, left, and Adam Birchall, right, were on target for Dover as they wrapped up their fourth league win on the bounce to stay in contention for the play-offs



Ten men hold firm to keep Whites' momentum going

FOOTBALL

■ BY TOM HOWARD

St Albans City 1

Roberts pen 30

Dover Athletic 2

Birchall 45, Welford 52



Dover Athletic starting XI



Subs used: Cloke (Birchall 80mins)

ANDY Hessenthaler is hoping to beat today's loan deadline to bring in reinforcements for Dover Athletic's final five games of the season.

The Whites remain in fourth place and on course for a Blue Square South play-off spot, following Saturday's 2-1 win at St Albans.

However, injuries to Dean Hill, Frannie Collin and Jake Leberl, have forced the Dover manager to delve into the loan market to aid his squad for the final push.

Hessenthaler said: "We are down to the bare bones at the minute because of injuries so I am hoping to get some cover."

"Ideally we would like a left back and I will try to see if we can get Tom Wynter back on loan from Gillingham."

The Whites boss hailed his side's performance on Saturday, which saw Dover secure a 2-1 win at St Albans amid difficult circumstances.

Dover fell behind on the half-hour when St Albans were awarded a penalty, which was dispatched by Drew Roberts.

But on the stroke of half-time the Whites

scored a timely equaliser through Adam Birchall. His 17th goal of the season proved to be the turning point of the game.

The visitors came out of the blocks quickly for the second half and Shaun Welford gave Dover the lead with a strike on 52 minutes.

The game took another twist shortly after, as Jon Wallis was shown his second yellow card and subsequently sent off.

St Albans rallied for the remaining minutes of the half, but Dover held on to the victory and another crucial three points.

Hessenthaler said: "The players were tremen-

dous, especially after we went down to ten men. They showed a lot of character to go on and win the game. On the whole we deserved the victory and it means we stay in the top five.

"We've had four wins on the bounce and have the momentum at this critical part of the season. However, we need this to continue as a couple more wins should cement us in the play-offs."

• Dover face a tough couple of fixtures over the Easter weekend, with a home game against Eastleigh on Saturday, followed by a trip to play-off hopefuls Welling United on Monday.

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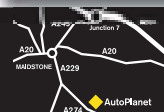
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Cugley won't talk title as Invicta close gap at top

FOOTBALL
BY DAVID PRITCHARD

Folkestone Invicta 2
Cass 22, Smith 73
Fleet Town 0

NEIL Cugley insists he is not looking any further than the next game despite watching his Folkestone Invicta side close the gap to Ryman South leaders Croydon Athletic on Saturday.

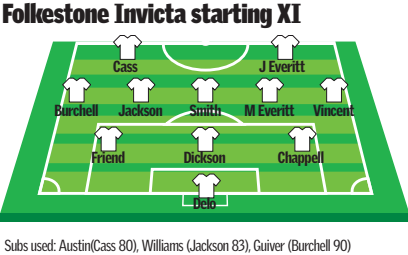
Goals from Brendon Cass and Darren Smith inflicted defeat on fellow promotion candidates Fleet Town, while results elsewhere also went Invicta's way as no other side in the top five won. With an 11-point lead over Burgess Hill Town in sixth before the midweek games, a play-off place now looks a virtual certainty.

With Croydon still to visit Cheriton Road, Invicta are still firmly in the title race heading into the final month of the season, but Cugley is taking it one step at a time.

He said: "It was a strange sort of day, we heard rumours the other sides around us weren't doing well, but you never know for sure. It puts us back into a strong position to



Picture: IOR KUPRO



CLINICAL: Darren Smith calmed any Folkestone nerves with a well-taken goal to seal victory against Fleet Town

make the play-offs, that's the first goal. Then we'll look to get second or third so we can be at home in the play-offs – if we secure that then we can aim to maybe get to the top.

"It would be a shame for nothing to be riding on the Croydon game [on April 20].

"It could be a special occasion if we're both still near the top."

Due to his small squad, Cugley was unable to make many changes on Saturday from the side which beat Maidstone United 2-1 in the

Kent Senior Cup less than 48 hours earlier.

Their exertions did not appear to have had a detrimental impact as Invicta started brightly against Fleet, taking the lead on 22 minutes when Cass converted Josh Burchell's cross.

The hosts had several opportunities to stretch their lead before half-time.

Liam Dickson and Cass both had headed efforts well saved by Fleet goalkeeper Lyall Beazley while at the other end Dickson cleared one effort off the line.

Fleet enjoyed a good spell after the break, but Invicta's outstanding defence held firm again as they sensed yet another clean sheet.

The hosts struck in clinical fashion to kill the game off 17 minutes from time as Smith finished coolly following good work from Micheal and James Everitt.

Cugley's side wound the clock down to seal a third successive win. Merstham visited Cheriton Road last night, log on to www.your-shepway.co.uk for details. This weekend the Seasiders visit Walton & Hersham.

RUGBY



Picture: IOR KUPRO

THRASHING: Folkestone ran in 12 tries on Saturday

Rolling Stones crush poor Gravesendians

Folkestone 76 Old Gravesendians 0

FOLKESTONE chalked up their biggest win of the season as they put struggling Old Gravesendians to the sword for the second time this season.

Saturday's try-fest surpassed the 64-0 scoreline in the reverse fixture earlier this season, and the Stones could have won even more comfortably if they had had sufficient appetite.

The home side established the pattern for the game within a minute as Karmo Lomp touched down for a try. From the kick-off Jack McMurray won the ball, exchanged passes with Daz Short and scored. Richard Lama added the conversion to make it 12-0.

Barely ten minutes were on the clock when the third try arrived, Scott Stewart breaking through and passing to Will Turner, again converted by Lama. Stewart, a product of the club's youth set-up, then scored a wonderful solo try, sprinting 60 yards to dive over. Lama converted to virtually make the game safe at 26-0.

There was still time before the break for the rampant home side to score two more tries. Adam Tolman scored before Short conjured the best score of the game, finishing off a flowing move to send Folkestone in at the break with a 38-0 lead.

Helped by a yellow card for one of Old Gravesendians' players, Folkestone started the second half as they had the first. McMurray and Tolman, with the help of two Lama conversions, took the score past 50 points.

The only question was how many points Folkestone could rack up before full-time.

Replacement Jon Morton, Drew Woolford, Tolman all scored in the closing stages, while the visitors' misery was compounded as the referee also awarded the Stones a penalty try.

The victory kept Folkestone eighth in London 3 South East with four games remaining. They visit seventh-placed Horsham on Saturday.

LEAGUE TABLE

(Not including midweek games)

BLUE SQUARE SOUTH						
	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
C Newport County	37	28	7	2	+61	91
2 Chelmsford City	36	20	7	9	+47	67
3 Braintree Town	37	17	15	5	+16	66
4 Dover Athletic	36	18	8	10	+15	62
5 Staines Town	37	16	12	9	+18	60
6 Welton United	37	17	8	12	+17	59
7 Thurrock	36	15	11	10	+13	56
8 Bath City	36	15	11	10	+12	56
9 Havant & Waterlooville	36	14	13	9	+4	55
10 Woking	36	15	9	12	+2	54
11 Eastleigh	36	15	8	13	+8	53
12 St Albans City	36	15	7	14	+4	52
13 Bromley	36	14	9	13	+5	51
14 Basingstoke Town	37	13	7	17	-13	46
15 Maidenhead United	36	10	12	14	-1	42
16 Dorchester Town	36	11	9	16	-13	42
17 Hampton & Richmond Boro	35	10	9	16	-12	39
18 Bishop's Cleeve	37	10	9	18	-15	39
19 Worcester City	37	8	10	19	-12	34
20 Lewes	35	5	14	16	-19	29
21 Weston-super-Mare	35	4	8	24	-32	20
22 Weymouth	37	4	7	26	-64	19

RYMAN DIVISION ONE SOUTH						
	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Croydon Athletic	33	21	6	6	+38	69
2 Folkestone Invicta (+10)	34	24	6	4	+26	68
3 Worthing	35	21	3	11	+26	66
4 Fleet Town	35	18	5	12	+18	59
5 Godalming Town (-3)	33	19	4	10	+18	58
6 Burgess Hill Town	34	16	9	9	+11	57
7 Sittingbourne	33	17	5	11	+21	56
8 Walton & Hersham	36	16	7	13	+5	55
9 Leatherhead	33	16	6	11	+21	54
10 Horsham YMCA	37	13	13	11	+7	52
11 Metropolitan Police	34	14	9	11	+12	51
12 Corinthian-Casuals	36	15	3	18	-11	48
13 Whyteleafe	36	14	5	17	+5	47
14 Ramsgate	35	12	11	12	-3	47
15 Merstham	36	12	9	15	-12	45
16 Chatham Town	36	13	3	20	-18	42
17 Dulwich Hamlet	35	10	10	15	-12	40
18 Chipstead	35	8	8	19	-19	32
19 Ashford Town	37	7	10	16	-29	31
20 Whitstable Town	34	9	2	23	-44	29
21 Eastbourne Town	36	6	10	20	-33	28
22 Walton Casuals	37	6	8	23	-27	26

KENT LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION						
	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Faversham Town	23	18	2	3	+40	56
2 Herne Bay	22	15	1	6	+27	46
3 Beckenham Town	22	13	5	6	+21	44
4 Sevenoaks Town	23	12	4	7	+10	40
5 Greenwich Borough	25	11	7	7	+9	40
6 Hythe Town	24	10	8	6	+23	38
7 Deal Town	23	10	6	7	+1	36
8 Erith Town	23	9	6	8	+6	33
9 Erith & Belvedere	24	9	6	9	-6	33
10 Holmesdale	23	9	3	11	+3	30
11 Tunbridge Wells	24	7	7	10	-3	28
12 Norton Sports	23	7	6	10	-5	27
13 Sporting Bengal United	29	7	4	18	-50	25
14 Corinthian	25	6	3	16	-29	21
15 Fisher	23	5	5	13	-23	20
16 Lordswood	24	2	9	13	-24	15

FIXTURES (Saturday): Blue Square South: Dover Athletic v Eastleigh; Ryman Division One South - Walton & Hersham v Folkestone Invicta; Kent League Premier Division - Deal Town v Tunbridge Wells, Sporting Bengal United v Hythe Town

Town encounter a Hol lot of trouble on their travels

FOOTBALL

Holmesdale 3 Hythe Town 1

HYTE Town's gradually improving form came to an end on Saturday as they were beaten away at Holmesdale.

Craig Thompson's equaliser marked the high point for the visitors, who were second best after the break against a Holmesdale side enjoying their best form of the season.

Hythe came into the game in a buoyant mood after scoring two late goals to beat Herne Bay in thrilling fashion three days earlier. The victory was Town's first in more than a month, but a run of draws ensured they visited Holmesdale on a run of five games without defeat.

The hosts opened the scoring on 11 minutes with an unstoppable strike from Huseyn Budak. The lead lasted just eight minutes, as Thompson netted his third goal in five games. But Hythe were unable to build on the breakthrough and within five minutes fell behind to another well-taken goal, this time from Joel Hughes.

Holmesdale wrapped up the game with a goal from Nathan Bell 16 minutes from time.

The defeat left Hythe sixth in the Kent League table, with just six games remaining.

Porter's side had the opportunity to bounce straight back when they hosted Sevenoaks Town last night. Log on to www.your-shepway.co.uk for details. This weekend Town are in action twice. On Saturday they visit Sporting Bengal, before Beckenham Town visit Reachfields on Easter Monday.



Picture: IOR KUPRO

DEFEATED: Hythe boss Scott Porter saw his side lose

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